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THE NOVELS AND ROMANCES

OF

ALPHONSE DAUDET

Handy Library Edition

MONDAY TALES

LETTERS FROM MY MILL

LETTERS TO AN ABSENT ONE

The Novels and Romances of ALPHONSE DAUDET

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TO MY DEAR

ERNEST DAUDET

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THERE are offspring of genius that start upon a separate existence of their own, without sponsors, quite independent of their paternity, of which they make no betrayal that may throw light upon the relation which must always exist between the man of letters and his art. On the whole, very few are the works in English that possess an autobiographical flavor. Our greatest men are strangely silent about themselves. A dumb devil of incommunicableness and reticence possesses them. Interrogate their writings, and these scarcely answer, or answer at times in a half-shamefaced, halting, and awkward fashion, as if to talk of one's self at all were, in some sort, a deadly sin. This reserve is perhaps inseparable from a race that regards literature as a most serious profession, mere *causerie* in print as a trivial thing, but it springs more naturally from the conviction that, however a man's work may belong to mankind, his life belongs to himself alone, not to the afterworld, is a thing of value to no one save himself, — that curiosity on the part of the public is an intrusion. Genius, especially English genius, decrees for itself a strangely isolated path.

Our Gallic brother, on the contrary, recognizes that, once the children of his brain have seen the light of day, he has indeed given "hostages" to Fame, and accepts good-humoredly the inevitable consequences, assumes the fact that the world is henceforth interested in him, regards its curiosity not as an impertinent emotion, but a most laudable one, deserving to be gratified. He realizes, too, that not the most kindly, intelligent, and grateful of all critics among his posterity shall ever be able to throw a more brilliant and sympathetic light upon an author's life and work and leanings than he himself can. Nor does he consider a playful naïve egotism incompatible with the dignity of a littérateur. Hugo, Dumas, Daudet, are merely instances of that which is so peculiarly a French characteristic. If the Saxon is a nation of conquerors, the French is peculiarly a nation of talkers; and literature, after all, is merely conversation in print, a delightful monologue, where the writer's public is also his friend.

The Frenchman, whether he writes merely for the Parisian, for France, or for a still larger republic, is *en rapport* with his public, and assumes it is interested in himself. Hence the spontaneity and charm of what he has to say, often one of manner, rather than of matter. Is he his own biographer? Then his artistic sense will save him from sins against good taste. He suppresses here, adds a touch there, is nowhere too literal. His the power to embellish, ornament facts, interweave fancies, interpolate just that element of the picturesque,

the fabulous, which adds flavor. Always an enemy to dull literalness, in order to entertain you he merely begs that you will not take him too seriously. He does not ask you to believe all he tells you, or to probe too minutely, merely to discover just how much is fact, and what is fiction. You may smile at him, and he is not offended, for often a smile at his own expense has anticipated yours. And if at times he seems to wear the cap and bells of a jester, his real mood is perhaps too sad for weeping. A laugh may lurk behind the tear; the tear quite as often hides beneath the smile. This was at times the charm of Heine's prose, its wit and humor, at best, more French than German; the charm of Jean Paul's, — the Midas touch that poetizes minor miseries and petty pains. This, too, is the quality of Daudet's Short Stories.

Yet Daudet was a realist. He wrote of little that had not come under his observation, was all his life a laborious taker of notes. *Fromont Jeune*, *The Nabob*, *Jack*, *Sapho*, — these are contemporary studies, realistic enough, of life as he saw it. The background is ever a familiar one.

But it is true that in these longer works the personal note is rarely struck. The realist was also too much an artist to confound the office of biographer and of novelist.

And that is why — to the student for whom life and literature are inseparable — Daudet's longer novels are not the most interesting of his works, since there is always a certain fascination in seeking behind names and titles and events that un-

known quantity, the writer himself, — a delight in the book about which clings the delicate perfume of a personality not purely fictitious. As we love to trace those resemblances, real or fancied, of children to their parents, so we delight in those mannerisms of a writer peculiarly his own, — those confidences, stray bits of information that reveal the man through his writings.

In some few of his works, not the longer ones, Daudet has left the reader this legacy, about which lingers the charm of all dear, personal, familiar things. In *Le Petit Chose, Souvenirs d'un Homme de Lettres*, in *Trente Ans de Paris*, it is Daudet who speaks. *Le Petit Chose* is the narrative of a youth not as yet quite sure of himself. Its very strength is also its weakness. As Daudet himself said, "At twenty-five one is scarcely mature enough to review and annotate his own life!" In the *Souvenirs* and in *Thirty Years of Paris*, the personal note is struck again, but this time in stronger, manlier fashion, by a man sure of himself, his art. In *Lettres de mon Moulin* and *Contes du Lundi* are the intermediate experiences that bridge the gap between the dreams of a youth of twenty and the maturer views and soberer vision of the man of fifty.

Reading these chapters of Daudet's life written by himself, one almost wishes that every man of letters might be his own biographer — and with a touch as kindly and tolerant of himself and others as was Alphonse Daudet. It is a loving, altogether lovable personality that is revealed to us in *The Letters from my Mill* and *The Monday Tales.*

Little What 's His Name grown a few years older, that is all; still the Child of Provence, impulsive, warm-hearted, — a child who has not yet outgrown his fondness for playing at Crusoe; though he has parted with Friday and the parrot, he is still a solitary Robinson with all Paris for his Desert Island.

It is Little What 's His Name whose voice is heard again in *The Monday Tales* in a strain as prophetic as tender when he stands at the bedside of a dead friend: —

"It was heartrending to gaze at the lifeless head, drooping so heavily upon the pillow, asleep in death, while at his side lay that book which so soon would be seen in the shop-windows; whose title passers-by would read mechanically, and carry away in the memory, vividly impressed there, with the name of its author inscribed now upon that sadder leaf of the city's register, — that name whose letters looked so gay upon the cover, the cover still fresh, unfaded. The entire problem of the soul and the body was there: that rigid corpse would so soon be given to earth and forgotten; while the book, starting forth on its life apart from him, like a visible soul, was full of vitality, and perhaps a thing immortal."

With the shock of Daudet's death still fresh in the memory, the title of his *Last Book* still ringing in the ears, the words have a deeper significance than before. "The least page he has ever written will preserve the vibration of his soul as long as our language shall exist," said Zola at the grave of Daudet. Strong and deep words from

the grim realist whose theories of life and art seem often so opposed to his own. Did Daudet anticipate this verdict in *The Last Book?*

Whether so or not, no more lasting legacy to the French language than the various series of short stories which appeared from time to time during the middle period of his life in Paris. Had he written not another line, his place in literature would have been assured. For each of these stories bears the stamp of a classic, is a book in miniature. Nothing more finished, more perfect, in literary form than these *contes*, — not even the prose of De Maupassant. For De Maupassant's short stories are prose always, prose of the cruellest, bitterest sort, which cuts, sears, corrodes, — art indeed for art's sake, but stripped of every generous illusion. Cruel motive, mean thought, ignoble desire, are so often the theme of him who has penned the most perfect prose ever written. The short stories of Daudet, on the contrary, are poems in prose.

Daudet is not an optimist through indifference or ignorance, but through conviction. He saw as plainly as did De Maupassant the frailty and meanness and misery of life. His ear was equally sensitive to every strain of the world's minor music; yet, after all, it is a world of rich and generous emotions Daudet would have us believe. Life is a goodly thing. The sunshine — how blessed a gift! The peasant's rags need not of necessity hide a beggar's soul. For Daudet, thought has wings. The convulsive heaving of a shawl above

the poor, thin shoulders it covers but scantily, is sufficient to reveal to him all the domestic tragedy of a simple bourgeoise. A mere pantomime of the street, a little dumb show as expressive as the pantomime of two of Seraphin's marionettes, often suggests to him a drama of the hearth.

Daudet was, in a certain sense, the pioneer of the modern Short Story in France. The *conte*, the *nouvelle*, has indeed been the special inheritance of the descendants of the Latins, and in France the short story is centuries old.

Yet with Daudet the short story acquired a new, purely modern significance. He was perhaps the first to apply this form of literary art to a passing phase of thought, to a momentary emotion, and to incidents that are psychological in character, rather than anecdotic. *La Comédie Humaine* Balzac called that tremendous drama prolonged through volume after volume. *Une chronique humaine*, Daudet might have called those short stories extending over some of the best, most productive years of his life, — a human chronicle of contemporary life and manners, on a humbler, far less pretentious scale than Balzac's Comedy, — yet a chronicle that appeals to all classes, finds its subjects among all classes, and even among the *déclassé*. The Paris *ouvrier*, the little bourgeois, the poet, the Academician, agas, Turkos, provincials, all are familiar figures for Daudet. And note how every superfluous detail, every repetition, is brushed away. Never a phrase too much. Each sketch is as clear-cut as a cameo, upon whose brilliant back-

ground stands in fine, bold relief the figure, the event, he wishes to describe.

"Un peu trop de papier, mon fils!" says Flaubert after a perusal of *Jack*. This charge cannot be brought against the short stories. Each is complete in itself, and contains material that, if amplified, might serve for many a novel or drama.

Yet how slight in themselves are often the details of the story. A mere newspaper clipping, a chance paragraph, no more. And yet so much of life is made up of the seemingly insignificant happenings. Daudet rarely deals with the exceptional, rarely descends to extravagance or caricature in his portrayals of character. It is in the average, ordinary, seemingly commonplace man and woman that he frequently finds all the elements of a tragedy, a domestic drama. Here at least he is one with the realists, with Tourguénef, Zola, Tolstoi, Ibsen. But he differs from them all as completely as the atmosphere of his own sunburned Provence differs from the cold, gray dawn of a winter morning in Paris. He touches commonplace events to transfigure them; he does not see life through rose-hued spectacles, but he views many things through the luminous, tender mist of fancy. For the great man who reads life deeply, the humblest, least important event is full of solemn significance, the smallest life holds in itself, potentially, the elements of the sublimest drama, the profoundest tragedy.

It was this deep, underlying sense of the vast possibilities of life that made Daudet's mirth a far different thing from the humor of Dickens.

Daudet's mirth is sometimes scarcely more than a suppressed trembling of the muscles, his humor as delicate as the quiver of a butterfly's wing. It springs from subtler perceptions of the incongruous, the ludicrous, than those which made Dickens a popular idol. Daudet states often from a humorous standpoint a truth that has a deeper side, but the smile is scarcely more than a ripple of the surface. A wave may break into innumerable, tiny flowers of foam, but the deep undercurrent remains unchanged. Daudet's humor is never the Gargantuan laugh.

The short stories are Daudet at his best, a style tense, virile, full of suppressed energy. The pictures he sees are clearly conveyed to the mental retina, and focused there. His sense of color and form is at times as vivid and keen as Gautier's. Sometimes he lays on the colors broadly, again with all the minuter delicacy of touch. He has always the painter's instinct for a fitting background which shall bring his figures into relief.

In a charming chapter of *Thirty Years of Paris*, Daudet has given us the story of his *Letters from my Mill*. Concerning *The Monday Tales* he has said little. Possibly this is because they are somewhat of the nature of isolated sketches, not bound together by one central idea. Possibly they had not, in his view, the scope and value of the longer works, yet it is true that they helped to build that solid structure of Daudet's reputation, and are as finished in workmanship as anything he has ever written.

The Monday Tales first appeared as occasional contributions to *Figaro*. A portion of them were brought into volume-form in 1871, and published under the title of *Lettres à un Absent*, dedicated to Daudet's poet-friend, Paul Arène, a captain of the Mobiles.

In 1873, all the stories were brought together and then published under the title of *Les Contes du Lundi*. The story entitled *The Three Low Masses* has also appeared in *Letters from my Mill*. Those which originally formed part of the *Lettres à un Absent* are *The Mothers*, *At the Outposts*, *Country-folk in Paris*, *The Boy Spy*, *Bélisaire's Prussian*, *The Defence of Tarascon*, *The Siege of Berlin*, and *The Clock of Bougival*, published originally as *Our Clocks*.

The writer was a man of more than thirty, to whom success had come, who had found his public. The events of the Franco-Prussian War had sobered him, and given a new tinge of earnestness to his work.

There is a nobler strain in these stories than speaks from the pages of *Le Petit Chose*, — the ring of passionate patriotism, no longer the voice of Provence, or of Paris, but the voice of France.

These stories, offered to the most captious of editors who has ever catered to the most capricious of publics, were polished and repolished with the utmost care before they reached the columns of *Le Figaro*. In *Thirty Years of Paris*, Daudet has left his impressions of De Villemessant, the terrible ogre of *Figaro*, who after numerous disastrous

literary enterprises, the last of which had been suppressed by the police at the time of the famous *coup-d'état*, was devoting all his energies to the exploitation of the novelty in literature, everything most *article* among literary wares bearing the genuine stamp *article de Paris*. De Villemessant would not seem as unusual a figure to-day as at the time when Daudet first met him. Ernest Daudet, in *Mon Frère et Moi*, has described his brother's relations with him. Daudet has related with what trembling he committed to the letter-box of *Figaro* that delightful, fantastic, symbolic thing, the *Romance of Little Red Riding Hood*, which first attracted the ogre's attention, and caused him to recognize the appearance of a new force in literature.

Fortunate for Daudet that so early in his career he found favor in the eyes of this formidable character. True, the connection with *Figaro* brought him no great pecuniary gain: money did not come in very fast; and the author of *Little Red Riding-hood's Romance* had not a few unromantic, very realistic interviews with a very grim Wolf. At this time he had quitted the dismal attic in the Grand Hôtel du Senat; but the garret was none too warm, in which he sat muffled in an old blanket writing for *Figaro*. And yet he was assured of a public, and a public to which he was compelled to give nothing but his best.

To return to *The Monday Tales*. Roughly classified, they fall into three divisions, — those which are autobiographical, in the nature of remi-

niscence; those which are chronicles, bird's eye pictures of contemporaneous events; and those which are more purely imaginative and fantastic. They have been classified in this volume as fantasy and history, — caprices and souvenirs. The line that separates fact from fiction must not be drawn too closely. Daudet, like all artists, took occasional liberties with history, modified here, altered slightly there, — as in the *Battle of Père-La-Chaise* and the story of *Les Petits Pâtés*. Nor is it always easy to say how far fiction mingles with fact in these stories. Such stories as *The Siege of Paris*, *The Mothers*, are stamped with the spirit of truth, with a vitality which makes one forget to inquire how literally they may be true. Occasionally the use of coincidences seems a little overdrawn, as in *The Siege of Berlin*, where the death of the old cuirassier, simultaneous with the entry of the Germans into Paris, savors just a trifle of the melo-dramatic and improbable. But, after all, *The Siege of Paris* had not a little of melodrama mingled with its tragedy, and no fiction could seem more extravagant than much of the truth concerning it. In the death of Chauvin, "the Last Frenchman," we have grim, sad truth regarding the siege, — truth however, from the standpoint of an eye-witness who, in spite of the fact that he was a minor actor in the drama, never lost his power of viewing events from the standpoint of a disinterested outsider.

The touching story, *La Dernière Classe*, might have come from the lips of an Alsatian, so true it

it to the spirit of Alsace during those sorrowful days that followed the Franco-Prussian War.

The part that Daudet played in this war it is not necessary to dwell upon here, except to emphasize the value it gives to those historic sketches in the *Contes du Lundi*, which relate to the siege of Paris. The narration of an eye-witness of events while history is in process of making has always a significance far beyond that possessed by the commentary of the most brilliant historian, who must rewrite history from musty archives. When the eye-witness is Alphonse Daudet, the value of the chronicle is still greater. A man with a passion for new scenes and events, whose mental notes were copious, keen, and accurate; a man who sees a thousand subtile, impalpable things that escape coarser powers of vision, who possesses the rare gift of using words with such exactness that others can see with his eyes, pictures so vivid they need but little by way of text, — such an eye-witness of the Siege of Paris cannot fail to make valuable contributions to its history. With a good map of Paris and its fortifications, and these historical sketches of *The Monday Tales*, the general reader may glean more of the actual events of the siege than from many a history.

The first days and weeks of the Terrible Year, the life at the outposts, the subsequent days of the Commune, — all are touched upon. Needless perhaps to say that Daudet had small sympathy with the events and leaders of the Commune, and left Paris during those troublous days.

In that mighty upheaval of Paris which brought so many turbid elements to the surface,—that drama wherein the ludicrous so often jostles the tragic, the profound, — Daudet's perceptions of the farcical and incongruous are as keen as his perception of the noble, the pathetic, and heroic. He sees Paris as Englishmen have seen and described it during the siege. No unprejudiced, impartial outsider ever saw the inherent weak points of French life and character more keenly than he. Politics he hated. Officialism, though he had studied it from the inside, possessed no glamour for him. He dared to describe things as he saw them, yet the patriotic note in his writings is as strong as the critical and ironic. Daudet is French indeed in his seeming inability to understand the conquering Teuton. His prejudice at times moves a smile. It is so naïve, so intensely Parisian, that contempt for a conqueror who could not even pronounce the language of the vanquished! He can see only grossness, coarseness, and ignorance, in "Attila encamped about Paris." He regards the Berlinese with all the inbred repugnance of a Parisian *élégant*. So De Montpavan, had he outlived his Duke long enough, might have lamented the utter absence of *Tenue* — on the part of the conqueror. Bulwer-Lytton, in his novel of "The Parisians," sees the German from quite another than the Gallic standpoint.

The tremendous principles at work beneath that invasion of France, the iron, inexorable energy of the Great Chancellor, the mighty forces back of

the movement, — if Daudet realized anything of these things, he does not let us suspect the fact. Possibly he did understand far better than he lets us believe in *Les Contes du Lundi*. Possibly if he could speak, his last word concerning the Teuton would be something profounder than the delicate raillery of *The Clock of Bougival*, or the less kindly satire of *The Blind Emperor*.

The siege of Paris left its ineffaceable influence upon Daudet's life. The war of 1870 was for him a revelation, writes Léon Daudet. *At the Outposts* and *My Kepi* contain some of his personal recollections of the days of the siege.

With the exception of the sketches relating to the siege, the stories in this volume which are reminiscences of the writer are not many. *The Pope is Dead* contains recollections of Daudet's childhood. Readers of *Le Petit Chose* will remember the sale of the factory, and the heartbreak of Little Crusoe at seeing his desert island transformed. Shortly afterward, the Daudet family removed to Lyons, exchanging its fog and gloom for their beloved Nîmes. Alphonse found delight and consolation upon the river. To spend long afternoons upon it he played truant again and again, the motherly Ernest shielding the younger brother from blame. When reports of the boy's absence were sent home, Ernest would intercept them and answer them in his father's name. Often he would aid the younger in inventing excuses, privately lecturing the little brother, who, in the deep contrition of the moment, would solemnly promise

never to sin again. The imagination of Ernest was not always equal to the strain of inventing these repeated excuses, but the imaginative powers of the future author of *Tartarin* never failed him, and upon one occasion he tells us he actually invented the death of the visible Head of the Church to divert from himself the suspicions of that dear mother, — no Roman of them all more devout Roman Catholic than she. And, most startling fact, the ingenious young Provençal, the future father of Tartarin, was so deeply overcome by the emotion which his story had called forth that on the sorrowful evening, when, seated about the table, the family recalled the history of popes past and present, he almost came to believe his own invention. Those who love to think that the child is father to the man will see in this young méridional the promise of the novelist who describes the feats of his lion-hunting countryman with such sympathetic and loving irony of soul; and the very, very good people will remember that in the south of France the Lie is not regarded too seriously, and that, indeed, all France is *un peu de Tarascon.*

In *The Caravansary* and in *Decorated the 15th of August* we have detached pages from Daudet's notes taken during his journey in Algeria.

In 1861 the evil effects of the privations Daudet had endured since his coming to Paris, four years before, began to manifest themselves. He fell seriously ill. De Morny, who had no little fondness for his young *attaché du cabinet*, sent for him, and gave him leave of absence to travel. "I must ap-

point you sub-prefect somewhere in the South," he said graciously. "You are very young, and you will not cut your hair, but that will not matter." And he sent him, at the doctor's suggestion, to Algeria, with money to defray the expenses of the tour. New and picturesque surroundings, novelty of scenery, the rich and brilliant coloring of the picture, made a strong impression. To this journey we owe two of the most beautiful of *The Monday Tales.*

He returned to Paris just in time to be present at the performance of his first play, *La Dernière Idole.* In spite of the fact that his patron was there, that the Duchess broke her fan, so vigorous her applause, Daudet tells us that he found it a relief when the curtain fell, and hurried away, edging along the walls, his collar turned up, ashamed and furtive as a thief.

In *Un Soir de première* he gives us a painful bit of confidence as to his varied emotions on a first night performance of one of his plays, and describes in his vivid way the agonies of an unsuccessful dramatist. Daudet's imagination had nerves, as well as wings. He suffered at times from an excess of it; and it must be remembered, as regards this sensitiveness concerning his plays, that he had cause for it; they have been the least successful of his writings, — his genius was not of the sort to accommodate itself readily to the exigencies of the stage.

In 1862 his health failed again, and he was granted another absence. During a sea-voyage,

he visited Corsica and Sardinia. He made many notes during this journey, which were afterwards used in *The Nabob*. Reminiscences of it in *The Monday Tales* are contained in the *Scènes Gastronomiques*.

On his return some memorable days were spent with Mistral and the Félibres.

In 1863 began the first series of *Letters from my Mill*. In the death of the Duc de Morny, 1865, Daudet lost a protector and friend. He at once and forever severed his connection with things official. Though the duties of his position were not onerous, they had proved irksome to him.

Incidentally, during those first years in Paris, Daudet had seen not a little of the life of Bohemia. Among those who met in the Brasserie des Martyres, in the street of the same name, back of Notre Dame, was one whom Daudet refers to more than once in the *Contes du Lundi*, Alfred Delvau, a young author, better known, however, to collectors of rarities than to the ordinary reader.

Upon the death of De Morny, Daudet and Delvau planned a journey together, which the latter has described in a little book now very rare. In this Daudet is referred to as *Fortunio!*

Fortunio has not a great deal to say of his comrade, but refers to him now and then as a not too talkative companion. It seems they were not always in harmony, as the "not too talkative companion" insisted always on retiring to bed immediately after supper, precisely at the moment when Fortunio was widest awake.

Recollections of a portion of this journey are to be found in *Alsace! Alsace!* *The Judge of Colmar* contains more impressions.

It was this friend Delvau to whom reference is again made in *The Blind Emperor* as the wild comrade with whom Daudet travelled through Baden, asking for food in divers inns in phrases whose poverty of words was concealed by a most moving musical setting. Startling indeed to the good innkeepers over the Rhine must have seemed the melodious phrases of the two mad Frenchmen.

The Blind Emperor also revives other memories of a journey made in 1866, before France had occasion to become more intimately acquainted with the Germans and their language.

Finest perhaps of all the flowering of Daudet's genius are those tales which are purely fictitious or fanciful. They have been likened to Hauff's, Hoffman's, Andersen's; but Daudet's style is peculiarly his own and inimitable. He plays upon the entire gamut of thought and feeling, passing from grave to gay, and striking music everywhere. Here is a thought as light, as evanescent, as the play of a sunbeam on the wing of a humming-bird, or the flashing of spray on an oar, as it dips into the ocean; — again the fine, strong breath of the mistral.

A charm that eludes analysis, or literal translation,—

> "Li vagoun dins de canestello
> Carrejon tout, e lèu, lèu, lèu!
> Mais carrejon pas lou soulèu,
> Mai carrejon pas lis estello!"

Sunshine and starlight are here, the soul of Provence, its vigor and joy incarnate. Speech is a clumsy, lumbering vehicle at best. "So many things are lost in that journey from the brain to the hand," says Daudet. And how shall one translate into speech, fire and laughter and tears?

That which has endeared the writer of these short stories to the world is the charm of the *insaisissable.* More difficult to say what that is, than to state definitely all it is not. It is something as subtle as the symbolism of Maeterlinck, a quality that eludes the mere logician, the scientist, the prosateur. Even the wisdom of the sage shall not compass it. There are finer vibrations of this old planet than those to which our ears are accustomed; but to hear, the inner sense must be attuned to the music of an invisible orchestra, one must have spent long lazy hours in Nature's dear hostelry *à la belle Étoile!* — must have spelled out the book-lore written in quaint arabesques in that Bibliothèque des Cigales, whose next door neighbor is the Poet.

In this volume Tarascon appears — perhaps for the first time, for this may have been written in 1871, while the first of the Tartarin series is dated 1872,— Tarascon itself appears in all its glory of sunshine and river.

Henry James tells us that the little town received its name from an ancient legend of a terrible dragon known as the Tarasque. Saint Martha with her own hands tamed this fearful beast, which

once had its cavern among the rocks, where now a castle stands, and has given its name to the town of Tartarin, the Formidable! Whether this mythical creature was as noisy a beast as the dreadful dragon that belches fire and noise in the Wagnerian Trilogy, Mr. James has not told us; but certainly Tarascon has made no small amount of noise in the world since the day of the Dragon; and the Tarasconian of Alphonse Daudet is quite as formidable as the Wagnerian dragon, — with eyes that bulge ferociously, and lips that belch noise and fire.

Near by is the castle of good King Réné, a fortress of yellow stone, overlooking the river. Hither, in the middle of the fifteenth century, King Réné himself retired, grown weary of fighting and enamoured of his dear Provence, which, with a proper showing of gratitude, has embalmed his memory in many a legend. Beaucaire, separated from Tarascon by a little footbridge, was endeared to Daudet by many a childish recollection.

Tartarin himself does not appear in the Defence so feelingly described in this volume. A figure of too majestic, heroic proportions to be disposed of in a few brief pages — or perhaps at the time he was away lion-hunting.

Tarascon has long since forgiven "the mocking child of Nîmes," if indeed it was ever greatly indignant with him. How would it have been possible to remain churlishly vexed with Alphonse Daudet?

"And, besides, he is one of ourselves!" said a

son of the Midi; he had begun by abusing the creator of Tartarin with furious zeal, yet could not restrain his laughter in recalling the hero's prodigious feats, — that frank southern laughter *en large* which Daudet tells about; questioned, he admitted there was not a little of Tartarin in the South, and, gently led on, ended with a glorification of Daudet, claiming him as the true, unique product of the Midi — in whom the North had no share!

And this is the general attitude of the southerner towards Tartarin. They forgive in the southerner, in one of themselves, what they would never have pardoned in the Parisian, the bourgeois.

And no mere Parisian, no northerner, could have written the *Defence of Tarascon*. He would have passed by the sleepy little town with a glance of indifference. Only the humor and imagination of a southerner ever could have thought of rescuing it from oblivion, to make it live forever as the object of the most delicious and kindly irony ever penned, irony that leaves no sting. Only a méridional, one steeped in the sunshine, the intense warm atmosphere of the land of olives, could penetrate the emotions of so extraordinary a being as the Tarasconnais. "*Ils étaient si extraordinaires, ces méridionaux!*" writes Daudet. One can almost fancy how, with that adorable smile of his, he might have added, "Who should know better than I? Who more of a méridional than I myself?"

And because of this quality, Daudet cannot see his Provence with the eyes of the realist. It is not

a great bare stretch of country washed with sunshine, but the Land of Mirage, the Provence of the Nineteenth-Century Troubadours, the Land of Roumanille and Mathieu and Mistral, of flower-fêtes and contests, the Provence of legend and song, of tender, glowing fancy, — an empire of simple, kindly hearts.

To the Félibres and his friendship with them, Daudet owed the revival of boyish associations and the formation of new ties. He has repaid the debt, and aided not a little in the fusion of north and south, — the breaking down of those barriers which sympathy and sentiment decree, rather than politics.

But if Daudet was and remained a southerner, life in Paris taught him to note, to analyze, to avoid excess, tempered the exuberance of the southerner, gave his art a poise, strength, and self-restraint of character which otherwise it might have lacked. He owed much to the literary environment of Paris, and, above all, his comradeship with Flaubert, De Goncourt, and Zola.

Daudet never quite overcame his first impression of Paris. In writing of it and of things Parisian, he speaks somewhat from the standpoint of an outsider. The mighty maelstrom of modern life fascinates him, but his curiosity seems somewhat akin to that of a foreigner. The great city, with its varied scenes and ever-changing life, becomes for him at times a personified thing almost. Sometimes this Paris wears for him the face of a cruel inexorable monster that rends and devours;

again, the face of a courtesan, — without heart, whose smile is merely a grimace.

The life of the streets, of the home, impresses him profoundly. He starts for a walk and returns wearied, impregnated with all the wretchedness and sorrow of the great city. His soul is like a sensitized plate which records every impression. His sympathies, never effeminate, strike at times a note of the feminine, maternal almost in its tenderness.

This sympathy with wretchedness and suffering everywhere is the strongest, almost the only point of resemblance between Daudet and Dickens. One smiles with amazement to think that Daudet should have ever thought it necessary to disclaim such knowledge of Dickens as might warrant a charge of plagiarism, the resemblances of style are so superficial.

One lays aside *The Monday Tales* convinced that Daudet was possessed of a Sixth Sense, which perhaps may be imperfectly defined as the rudiments of the Five, and the Soul that interprets them, that intuitive faculty that marks the poet.

No musician, in the strict technical sense of the term, yet Daudet's prose is always musical, rhythmic, lyrical in quality. Not a poet in the sense in which Hugo was a poet, yet the poetic touch is upon all he has fashioned. His myopic eye saw innumerable fine things that escape ordinary eyes. Not a painter, yet he has left pen-pictures that will live when the canvas of many a modern masterpiece shall have faded.

If it may sometimes be said of Genius that all the Muses have presided over its destiny, may we not say that all the Graces were present at the cradle of Alphonse Daudet?

Fortunate and happy and blessed in his life, a sufferer too beyond most men, unsoured by suffering, unspoiled by success, this teller of stories — this Child of Provence, whose nervous, delicate fingers, wasted by disease, all the Graces guided, — he who could express with such surpassing tenderness and grace the things he saw, and, finest of fine things, added that touch of mirage, that gleam, —

> "The light that never was on sea or land,
> The consecration and the poet's dream."

M. M.

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PART I.

FANTASY AND HISTORY.

MONDAY TALES.

Alphonse Daudet

THE LAST LESSON.

A YOUNG ALSATIAN'S NARRATIVE.

THAT morning it was quite late before I started for school, and I was terribly afraid I should be scolded, for Monsieur Hamel had told us that he would question us upon participles, and I did not know the first thing about them. For a moment I thought of escaping from school and roving through the fields.

The day was so warm, so clear! The blackbirds were whistling on the outskirts of the woods. In Rippert Meadow, behind the sawmill, the Prussians were drilling. All these things were far more attractive to me than the rule for the use of participles. But I mustered up strength to resist temptation, and hurried on to school.

As I reached the town hall, I saw a group of people; they loitered before the little grating, reading the placards posted upon it. For two years every bit of bad news had been announced to us from that grating. There we read what battles had been lost, what requisitions made; there we learned what orders had issued from head-

quarters. And though I did not pause with the rest, I wondered to myself, "What can be the matter now?"

As I ran across the square, Wachter, the blacksmith, who, in company with his apprentice, was absorbed in reading the notice, exclaimed, —

"Not so fast, child! You will reach your school soon enough!"

I believed he was making game of me, and I was quite out of breath when I entered Monsieur Hamel's small domain.

Now, at the beginning of the session there was usually such an uproar that it could be heard as far as the street. Desks were opened and shut, lessons recited at the top of our voices, all shouting together, each of us stopping his ears that he might hear better. Then the master's big ruler would descend upon his desk, and he would say, —

"Silence!"

I counted upon making my entrance in the midst of the usual babel and reaching my seat unobserved, but upon this particular morning all was hushed. Sabbath stillness reigned. Through the open window I could see that my comrades had already taken their seats; I could see Monsieur Hamel himself, passing back and forth, his formidable iron ruler under his arm.

I must open that door. I must enter in the midst of that deep silence. I need not tell you that I grew red in the face, and terror seized me.

But, strangely enough, as Monsieur Hamel scru-

tinized me, there was no anger in his gaze. He said very gently, —

"Take your seat quickly, my little Franz. We were going to begin without you."

I climbed over the bench, and seated myself. But when I had recovered a little from my fright, I noticed that our master had donned his beautiful green frock-coat, his finest frilled shirt, and his embroidered black silk calotte, which he wore only on inspection days, or upon those occasions when prizes were distributed. Moreover, an extraordinary solemnity had taken possession of my classmates. But the greatest surprise of all came when my eye fell upon the benches at the farther end of the room. Usually they were empty, but upon this morning the villagers were seated there, solemn as ourselves. There sat old Hauser, with his three-cornered hat, there sat the venerable mayor, the aged carrier, and other personages of importance. All of our visitors seemed sad, and Hauser had brought with him an old primer, chewed at the edges. It lay wide open upon his knees, his big spectacles reposing upon the page.

While I was wondering at all these things, Monsieur Hamel had taken his seat, and in the same grave and gentle tone in which he had greeted me, he said to us, —

"My children, this is the last day I shall teach you. The order has come from Berlin that henceforth in the schools of Alsace and Lorraine all instruction shall be given in the German tongue only. Your new master will arrive to-morrow. To-day

you hear the last lesson you will receive in French, and I beg you will be most attentive."

My "last" French lesson! And I scarcely knew how to write! Now I should never learn. My education must be cut short. How I grudged at that moment every minute I had lost, every lesson I had missed for the sake of hunting birds' nests or making slides upon the Saar! And those books which a moment before were so dry and dull, so heavy to carry, my grammar, my Bible-history, seemed now to wear the faces of old friends, whom I could not bear to bid farewell. It was with them as with Monsieur Hamel, the thought that he was about to leave, that I should see him no more, made me forget all the blows of his ruler, and the many punishments I had received.

Poor man! It was in honor of that last session that he was arrayed in his finest Sunday garb, and now I began to understand why the villagers had gathered at the back of the class-room. Their presence at such a moment seemed to express a regret that they had not visited that school-room oftener; it was their way of telling our master they thanked him for his forty years of faithful service, and desired to pay their respects to the land whose empire was departing.

I was busied with these reflections when I heard my name called. It was now my turn to recite. Ah! what would I not have given then, had I been able to repeat from beginning to end that famous rule for the use of participles loudly, distinctly, and without a single mistake; but I became en-

tangled in the first few words, and remained standing at my seat, swinging from side to side, my heart swelling. I dared not raise my head. Monsieur Hamel was addressing me.

"I shall not chide thee, my little Franz; thy punishment will be great enough. So it is! We say to ourselves each day, 'Bah! I have time enough. I will learn to-morrow.' And now see what results. Ah, it has ever been the greatest misfortune of our Alsace that she was willing to put off learning till To-morrow! And now these foreigners can say to us, and justly, 'What! you profess to be Frenchmen, and can neither speak nor write your own language?' And in all this, my poor Franz, you are not the chief culprit. Each of us has something to reproach himself with.

"Your parents have not shown enough anxiety about having you educated. They preferred to see you spinning, or tilling the soil, since that brought them in a few more sous. And have I nothing with which to reproach myself? Did I not often send you to water my garden when you should have been at your tasks? And if I wished to go trout-fishing, was my conscience in the least disturbed when I gave you a holiday?"

One topic leading to another, Monsieur Hamel began to speak of the French language, saying it was the strongest, clearest, most beautiful language in the world, which we must keep as our heritage, never allowing it to be forgotten, telling us that when a nation has become enslaved, she

holds the key which shall unlock her prison as long as she preserves her native tongue.[1]

Then he took a grammar, and read our lesson to us, and I was amazed to see how well I understood. Everything he said seemed so very simple, so easy! I had never, I believe, listened to any one as I listened to him at that moment, and never before had he shown so much patience in his explanations. It really seemed as if the poor man, anxious to impart everything he knew before he took leave of us, desired to strike a single blow that might drive all his knowledge into our heads at once.

The lesson was followed by writing. For this occasion Monsieur Hamel had prepared some copies that were entirely new, and upon these were written in a beautiful round hand, "*France, Alsace! France, Alsace!*"

These words were as inspiring as the sight of the tiny flags attached to the rod of our desks. It was good to see how each one applied himself, and how silent it was! Not a sound save the scratching of pens as they touched our papers. Once, indeed, some cockchafers entered the room, but no one paid the least attention to them, not even the tiniest pupil; for the youngest were absorbed in tracing their straight strokes as earnestly and conscientiously as if these too were written in French! On the roof of the schoolhouse the pigeons were cooing softly, and I thought to myself as I listened,

[1] "S'il tient sa langue il tient la clé qui de ses chaines le délivre." F. MISTRAL.

"And must they also be compelled to sing in German?"

From time to time, looking up from my page, I saw Monsieur Hamel, motionless in his chair, his eyes riveted upon each object about him, as if he desired to fix in his mind, and forever, every detail of his little school. Remember that for forty years he had been constantly at his post, in that very school-room, facing the same playground. Little had changed. The desks and benches were polished and worn, through long use; the walnut-trees in the playground had grown taller; and the hop-vine he himself had planted curled its tendrils about the windows, running even to the roof. What anguish must have filled the poor man's heart, as he thought of leaving all these things, and heard his sister moving to and fro in the room overhead, busied in fastening their trunks! For on the morrow they were to leave the country, never to return. Nevertheless his courage did not falter; not a single lesson was omitted. After writing came history, and then the little ones sang their "*Ba, Be, Bi, Bo, Bu*," together. Old Hauser, at the back of the room, had put on his spectacles, and, holding his primer in both hands, was spelling out the letters with the little ones. He too was absorbed in his task; his voice trembled with emotion, and it was so comical to hear him that we all wanted to laugh and to cry at the same moment. Ah! never shall I forget that last lesson!

Suddenly the church clock struck twelve, and then the Angelus was heard.

At the same moment, a trumpet-blast under our window announced that the Prussians were returning from drill. Monsieur Hamel rose in his chair. He was very pale, but never before had he seemed to me so tall as at that moment.

"My friends — " he said, "my friends — I — I — "

But something choked him. He could not finish his sentence.

Then he took a piece of chalk, and grasping it with all his strength, wrote in his largest hand, —

"VIVE LA FRANCE!"

He remained standing at the blackboard, his head resting against the wall. He did not speak again, but a motion of his hand said to us, —

"That is all. You are dismissed."

A GAME OF BILLIARDS.

EVEN soldiers are exhausted after two days' fighting, especially if they have passed the night, knapsacks upon their backs, torrents of rain descending upon them. And yet for three mortal hours they had been left to wait in the puddles along the highway, in the mire of fields soaked with rain.

Heavy with fatigue, weakened by the effects of previous nights, their uniforms drenched, they pressed closer together for warmth and support. Here and there, leaning upon a neighbor's knapsack, a man had fallen asleep standing; and upon the relaxed faces of these men, overcome by sleep, might be read more plainly than before the traces which weariness and privations had made. In the mud and rain, without fire, without food, overhead a sky heavy and lowering — around them, on every side, the enemy! Dismal indeed!

What are they doing yonder? What is going on?

The guns, their mouths turned towards the woods, seem to be lying in wait. The mitrailleuses from their hiding-places stare fixedly at the horizon. All is ready for an attack. Why is none made? For what are they waiting?

They await orders from headquarters, but none come.

And yet it is only a short distance to headquarters, to that beautiful Louis XIII. château whose red-brick walls, washed by the rain, are seen halfway up the hill, glistening through the thickets. Truly a princely dwelling, well worthy of bearing the fanion of a Marshal of France. Separated from the main road by a big trench and a ramp of stone, are green, smooth-shaven lawns extending even to the stone steps of the château, and bordered with vases of flowers. On the side of the house farthest away from the road, the daylight darts through the leafage of the arbors, making bright openings in them. Upon an artificial pond which sparkles like a mirror, swans are swimming, and under the pagoda-shaped roof of a large aviary peacocks and golden pheasants strut about, spreading their wings and sending their shrill cries through the foliage. Though the owners of the house have departed, there is nowhere a perceptible sign of that ruin and utter desolation which war brings in its train. Under the oriflamme of the chief of the army not the smallest flower dotting the lawn has been destroyed, and it is indescribably charming to discover, so near the field of battle, that calm and opulence that result from systematic care, — to observe such evenly trimmed shrubberies, such silent avenues of shade. The rain, which in its descent elsewhere has rutted the roads and heaped them with mire, in this quarter has been nothing more than an aristocratic shower. Nothing vulgar

about it. It has revived the red tints of the bricks, the verdure of the lawns, it has added fresh lustre to the leaves of the orange-trees, to the swans' white plumage. Everything glistens. The scene is peaceful. In fact, were it not for the flag floating from the top of the roof, and the sight of two sentinels before the gate, one would never believe headquarters were here.

The horses are resting in the stables; here and there officers' servants are seen, and orderlies in undress, lounging about the kitchens of the château, and now and then a gardener tranquilly dragging his rake through the sand of the grounds.

In the dining-room, whose windows front the entrance of the château, is seen a table partly cleared, bottles uncorked, glasses tarnished, empty and dimmed, resting upon the wrinkled cloth, — in short, every indication that the repast is ended. The guests have departed, but in a side room loud voices are heard, peals of laughter, the rolling of billiard balls, and the clinking of glasses. The Marshal has just started upon his game, and that is why the army is waiting for orders. Once the Marshal has begun, the heavens might fall, but nothing on earth would hinder him from finishing his game.

For if the mighty soldier has a single weakness, it is his fondness for billiards. There he stands, as grave as though a battle had begun; he is in full uniform, his breast covered with decorations; his repast, the grog he has drunken, and the excitement of the game animate him. His eyes sparkle,

and his cheek-bones are flushed. About him gather his aides-de-camp, most assiduous in their attentions, deferential, and overcome with admiration at each of his shots. When the Marshal makes a point, they rush towards the mark. Is the Marshal thirsty? Each one desires to prepare his grog! Such a rustling of epaulettes and panaches, such a rattling of crosses and aiguillettes! How they bow and smile, these courtiers! What elegance and charm of manner! And then to see such embroideries, so many new uniforms, in this lofty chamber carved in oak, opening upon parks and courts of honor! It reminds one of those autumns of Compiègne, and makes him forget for a moment those figures in muddied cloaks, gathered yonder in the roads, making such sombre groups, as they wait in the rain.

The Marshal's adversary is an officer of his staff, a little captain who curls and laces and wears light gloves; he is an excellent shot at billiards, and could beat all the marshals on earth, but he understands how to keep at a respectful distance from his chief, and exercises all his skill in playing so that he shall neither win, nor seem to lose, too readily. Evidently an officer with an eye for the future.

Attention, young man, look out! The Marshal is five points ahead. If you can end the game as you have begun it, your promotion is surer than it would be, were you standing outside with the others, beneath those torrents of water that darken the horizon. It would be a pity, too, to soil that

fine uniform, and tarnish the gold of its aiguillettes, waiting for orders that never come.

The game is extremely interesting. The balls roll, graze each other, and pass; they rebound. Every moment the play grows more exciting. But suddenly a flash of light is seen in the sky and the report of a cannon is heard. A heavy, rumbling sound shakes the windows. Every one starts and casts an uneasy glance about him. The Marshal alone remains unmoved. He sees nothing, hears nothing, for, leaning over the table, he is about to make a magnificent draw-shot. Draw-shots are his forte!

But again that flash, and again! From the cannon fresh reports, and nearer together now. The aides-de-camp run to the window. Can it be that the Prussians are attacking?

"Let them!" says the Marshal, chalking his cue. "Your turn, captain!"

The staff thrills with admiration. Turenne asleep upon a gun-carriage was nothing compared to this marshal, so calmly absorbed in his game at the moment of action! But all this time the tumult increases. With the shock of the cannon mingles the rattling of the mitrailleuses, and the rumbling of volley upon volley; a reddish cloud dark at the edges rises from the further end of the lawn. All the rear of the park is on fire. Frightened peacocks and pheasants clamor in the aviary, Arabian horses, away in the stables, scent the powder and rear in their stalls. At headquarters a general commotion begins. Despatch follows despatch.

Messengers arrive at a gallop. Everywhere they are asking for the Marshal.

But the Marshal is unapproachable. Have I not told you that nothing in the world could hinder him from finishing a game once begun?

"Your play, captain — "

But the captain is distracted. Ah! Youth is youth. He loses his head, forgets what he is about, and makes two successive runs which almost win the game for him. And now the Marshal is furious. Surprise and indignation are visible upon his manly features. At this very moment a horse rushes into the courtyard at full speed and drops exhausted. An aide-de-camp, covered with mud, forces the sentry, makes one bound over the stone steps, crying, "Marshal, Marshal!" And this is his reception: the Marshal, red as a cock, and swelling with anger, appears at the window, cue in hand.

"Who is there? What is it? Is there no sentry here?"

"But, Marshal — "

"Oh, yes, yes — later — let them wait for my orders — in God's name!"

And the window closes with a bang.

Let them wait for his orders! And that is exactly what they are doing, these poor fellows. The wind drives rain and grapeshot in their faces. Whole battalions are slaughtered, whilst others, perfectly useless, stand bearing arms, unable to understand why they remain inactive. Nothing else to do. They wait for orders. But men may

die without word of command, and these men die in hundreds, falling behind bushes, dropping in trenches in front of that great silent château. And even after death, the grapeshot continues to lacerate their bodies, and from those gaping wounds flows a silent stream, — the generous blood of France. And above, yonder, in the billiard-room, all is as excited as upon the battle-field, for the Marshal has regained his advantage, and the little captain is playing like a lion.

Seventeen! eighteen! nineteen! Scarcely time to mark the points. The sound of battle grows nearer and nearer. The Marshal has but one more point to play for. Already shells are falling in the park. One has burst in the pond. Its glassy sheet reddens, and a terrified swan is seen swimming amid a whirl of bloody plumage. And now the last shot.

And then — deep silence. Only the sound of rain falling upon the leafage of the arbors, only an indistinct rumbling noise at the foot of the hill, and along the muddy roads a sound like the tramping of hurrying herds. The army is utterly routed. The Marshal has won his game.

THE VISION OF THE JUDGE OF COLMAR.

BEFORE he had taken the oath of allegiance to Emperor William, there was nowhere a happier man than little Judge Dollinger of the Court of Colmar; when he arrived in the court-room, full-lipped, big-bellied, his toque pushed jauntily sidewise, his triple chin resting placidly upon his muslin neckband, he seemed to say, as he seated himself, "Ah! a nice little nap I shall have!" and it was a pleasure to see him stretch his plump little legs, burying himself in his great armchair, while he reposed upon that fair, soft leather cushion to which he owed the fact that his complexion was as fresh as ever, and his temper as unruffled, although he had occupied a judge's seat for more than thirty years.

Unfortunate Dollinger!

From the moment he touched that leather circumference he was lost. He found it so comfortable, grew so attached to that cushion of moleskin, that sooner than budge from it, he became a Prussian. Emperor William said to him, "Keep your seat, Monsieur Dollinger!" and Dollinger kept it; and here we behold him at the Court of Colmar, dispensing justice as ably as ever, but in the name of His Berlinese Majesty.

About him nothing has changed, — the same tribunal, faded and dull, the same court-room, with its shiny benches and hum of lawyers' voices, the same dim, subdued light falling through the high windows with their serge curtains, the same majestic figure of the Christ, covered with dust, His head bowed, His arms outstretched. But the Court of Colmar has lost no whit of its former dignity in passing over to Prussia. There is still an Emperor's bust back of the judges' bench. Yet, in spite of all these things, Dollinger does not feel at home. Vainly he rolls from side to side in his armchair, buries himself in it angrily: he can no longer enjoy those nice little naps of other days; and when he chances, as of old, to fall asleep at a hearing, he has frightful dreams!

Dollinger dreams that he is seated upon a high mountain; it reminds him somewhat of Honeck, or the Balloon of Alsace. What is he doing there alone, in his judge's robe, at that vast height where nothing can be seen but stunted trees and swarms of flies? Dollinger does not know why he is there. Cold drops of sweat rise upon him; he trembles in suspense, and suffers all the agony of a nightmare.

Across the Rhine, behind the firs of the Black Forest, the sun is rising, large and red; and as it rises, below, in the valleys of Munster and Thann, is heard from one end of Alsace to the other an indistinct rumble, the sound of footsteps and of wagons in motion; it grows louder and nearer. Dollinger's heart sinks within him. Soon, upon the long, winding road ascending the sides of the

mountain, the Judge of Colmar sees approaching him a mournful, interminable train; all Alsace has chosen this pass of the Vosges as the starting-point of its solemn emigration!

Leading the procession, come long wagons drawn by four oxen, those long, open wagons which at harvest-time are seen overflowing with sheaves; now, however, they are loaded with furniture, tools, and luggage of all sorts. Big beds, tall presses, calico hangings, chests and spinning-wheels, children's chairs, ancestral armchairs, piles of ancient relics dragged from their corners, and scattering to every wind along the highway the sacred dust of the hearth. Entire households depart in these wagons, groaning as they advance. The oxen are scarcely able to drag their burden, for it seems as if the very earth clung to the wheels, as if these handfuls of dust clinging to plough and harrow, to rake and pickaxe, increased the burden they bore, — as though this departure were indeed an uprooting of the soil.

Then followed a silent train of people, of all conditions and ages: the aged grandfather with his three-cornered hat, — tremulous, leaning upon his staff; boys with flaxen curls, a single suspender supporting their trousers of fustian; the paralytic grandmother stout lads are bearing upon their shoulders; mothers, pressing their nursing babes closer to the breast; all are there, the brave-hearted, and the infirm, soldiers to be, and those who have faced the horrors of many a battle-field; cuirassiers, who have lost their limbs, dragging

themselves upon crutches; artillery-men, emaciated, broken-down, the damps of the casemates of Spandau still clinging to their uniforms. And all this host moves on its way with heads erect; at the side of that very road over which they are passing, the Judge of Colmar is seated, and as they pass him by he reads upon each averted face an awful look of anger and loathing.

Oh, unhappy Dollinger! he longs to hide, to flee, but it is impossible. For his armchair cannot be moved from that mountain, and his leather cushion is fastened to the armchair, and he is as firmly attached to that leather cushion. And now he understands that a sort of pillory stands there, and he is in it, and his pillory has been erected so high in order that all the world may witness his shame.

The emigrants move on, village after village; those of the Swiss frontier leading enormous herds of cattle; those of the Saar carrying their heavy iron tools in ore-wagons. Then the larger towns arrive, spinners, tanners, weavers and warpers, burghers and priests, rabbis, magistrates, black robes and red robes. The tribunal of Colmar appears, its venerable president at the head. And Dollinger, overwhelmed with shame, seeks to hide his face, but his hands are paralyzed; tries to close his eyes, but his eyelids are stiff and immovable. There he is compelled to remain, the most observed of observers; he may not be spared a single one of those contemptuous glances which his colleagues cast at him as they pass.

A judge in the pillory! Terrible indeed! And, worst of all, all his dear ones are in that concourse, and not one of them appears to recognize him. His wife, his children, pass before him, their eyes fixed on the ground. It would seem that they too are ashamed of him! Even little Michel, whom he loves so dearly, passes him by, never to return, and casts not a single glance in his direction. But the aged president pauses a moment, and whispers to him, —

"Come with us, Dollinger. Do not remain there, my friend!"

But Dollinger is unable to rise. He tries to move his limbs; he calls. All day long the procession moves on; and as the daylight fades, it has disappeared in the distance, and silence descends upon those fair valleys dotted with factories and belfry towers. All Alsace has departed. Only the Judge of Colmar remains. And there he sits at the top of the mountain, riveted in his pillory, immovable.

Suddenly the scene changes. Yew-trees are seen, black crosses, rows of tombs, and an assemblage of mourners. It is the cemetery of Colmar. Some one of note has come to his last resting-place. All the bells of the city are tolling. Councillor Dollinger is dead! That which honor could not effect, death has accomplished. It has unscrewed the immovable magistrate from his leather cushion, and he lies at full length, this man whose sole ambition was to remain seated forever!

What sensation more horrible than to dream that one is dead and his own chief mourner? His heart overcome with grief, Dollinger assists at his

own burial-service. And that which afflicts him more than his death is the fact that in this immense crowd which presses about him is neither friend nor relative. No one from Colmar, — only the Prussians! Prussian soldiers escort the bier; Prussian magistrates are the chief mourners; and the words that are spoken over his grave are Prussian; and the cold, cold earth thrown over him is, alas! Prussian earth. Suddenly the crowd stands respectfully aside. A magnificent white cuirassier approaches, concealing under his cloak something which looks not unlike a crown of immortelles. All about him voices are heard, saying,

"Look! There is Bismarck! There is Bismarck!"

And the Judge of Colmar thinks sadly, "A great honor, Count, you bestow upon me, but if I only had my little Michel — "

He does not end his sentence. A mighty burst of laughter interrupts him, — wild, mad, uncontrollable laughter, scandalizing to hear.

"What are they laughing about?" wonders the terrified judge. He raises himself and looks. It is his cushion, his own leather cushion, that Count Bismarck has placed religiously upon his grave, and around its moleskin circumference runs this inscription, —

TO JUDGE DOLLINGER,

The Glory of the Bench,[1]
Souvenirs and regrets!

[1] "La Magistrature *Assise*." The play upon words is scarcely translatable.

From one end of the cemetery to the other ring peals of laughter, convulsive laughter; and the boisterous mirth of the Prussians echoes even to the floor of the vault where the dead man lies weeping with shame, overwhelmed, covered with endless ridicule.

THE BOY SPY.

THEY called him Stenne, "little Stenne." He was a child of Paris, puny and pale. He might have been ten, possibly fifteen years old. It is hard to tell the age of such midges. His mother was dead, and his father, an old marine, was on guard in the Quartier du Temple. Babies and nursemaids, old women carrying their camp-stools, poor mothers, in short, all that portion of Paris that jogs along on foot, found a safe retreat from carriages in those gardens bordered by sidewalks; they were well acquainted with Father Stenne, and they adored him. For they knew well that, in spite of that ferocious mustache, the terror of stray dogs and of many a lounger who frequented the benches, the old soldier's smile was full of kindness, almost maternal in its tenderness; and to see that smile, one had merely to ask the good man, "How is your little boy?"

For Father Stenne loved his boy dearly. It gladdened his heart to have the little fellow call for him towards evening, after school was out; and together they promenaded the walks, stopping at every bench to reply to the polite greetings of the frequenters of the gardens.

But, alas! after the siege began, all was changed. Father Stenne's square was closed, and petroleum

was stored there; the poor man was compelled to be on guard ceaselessly, passing his days in those deserted groves, where everything was in confusion and disorder. He was not allowed even a smoke. He could not see his boy until he reached home, late in the evening. You should have seen his mustache when he mentioned the Prussians! but little Stenne was not at all averse to this new life.

For these gamins a siege furnishes considerable diversion. No more lessons, no more school! Vacation every day, and the streets full of life as a field on a fair-day!

The boy roamed the streets all day long, and never went in until nightfall. He accompanied the battalions of the neighborhood as they marched to the rampart, with a preference for those where the bands played the liveliest music, and on that subject little Stenne was quite an authority. He would tell you with an air of conviction that the band of the Ninety-sixth did not amount to much, but that of the Fifty-fifth was excellent. When he was not on the march, he would watch the *mobiles* at drill; and then there were those hours of waiting, when, his basket under his arm, he joined the long lines of people forming in front of butchers' and bakers' shops, in the unlighted streets, in the dull gray dawn of those winter days. And there, feet in the water, one stood, and made new acquaintances. Politics were discussed, and, being the son of Monsieur Stenne, he was asked his opinion on every hand. But most amusing of all he found

those *bouchon*[1]-games, especially that famous game of *galoche*, which the Breton soldiers had made quite fashionable during the siege. When little Stenne was not at the rampart or waiting in front of some baker's shop, you were sure of finding him watching a game of *galoche* in the Place du Château-d'Eau. Of course you will understand that he never played himself; it cost too much money. He contented himself merely with devouring the players with his eyes.

A big fellow who wore a coat and blue overalls, and never staked less than a hundred-sou piece, excited his special admiration. Whenever he ran, one could hear his money jingling in the depths of his pockets.

One day, picking up a piece of money which had rolled directly in front of little Stenne's feet, this fellow whispered to the little one, —

"That makes you squint, eh? Well, now, if you like, I can tell you where there are more of them."

And when the game was ended, he led little Stenne to a corner of the Place, and proposed the latter should join him in selling newspapers to the Prussians, thirty francs for each trip they made. At first little Stenne indignantly refused; and for three days in succession he was not seen watching the game, — three terrible days for him. He neither ate nor slept. At night he saw great heaps of *galoches* lying at the foot of his bed, and the floor paved with shining lines of hundred-sou

[1] *Bouchon.* A game in which pieces of money are placed upon a cork, — which is to be knocked over with a quoit.

pieces! The temptation was too strong; and the fourth day he returned to Château-d'Eau, saw the big fellow again, and allowed himself to be seduced.

They set out one snowy morning, carrying a canvas bag, their newspapers hidden in their blouses. They reached the Porte de Flandres just before daybreak. His companion took Stenne's hand, and, approaching the sentinel, — a worthy sedentary, with a red nose and a benevolent air, — he said in a whining voice, —

"Let us pass, my good sir. Our mother is sick; papa is dead. We are going, my little brother and I, to dig potatoes in the field."

He began to cry. Stenne, feeling very much ashamed, hung his head. The sentinel looked at both of them for a moment, then glanced at the road, white and deserted.

"Pass, but be quick!" he said, standing aside, and then they found themselves on the Aubervilliers road. How the rascal laughed!

Vaguely, as if in a dream, little Stenne saw factory after factory turned into barracks, deserted barricades stuffed with mouldy rags, and tall chimneys cutting the fog; but from those chimney tops, lost in the sky, no smoke ascended, and they were dented in places. Along the road sentinels were posted, and muffled officers stood, looking through their field-glasses; small tents soaked with melted snow were pitched in front of the dying fires. Stenne's companion knew the road well, and took a cross-cut to avoid passing the guard; but they were obliged to pass the advance-guard of sharp-

shooters. There they were in their capes, squatted in the bottom of a watery ditch which ran along the railroad to Soissons. But this time the big fellow tried to tell his story all in vain. They were not allowed to pass. While he was lamenting, there issued from the gate-keeper's house an old sergeant, white-haired and wrinkled, who looked not unlike Father Stenne himself.

"Come, you rascals, don't cry any more," he said to the boys. "You may go and dig your potatoes, but first come in and warm yourselves a little; that young vagabond there looks as if he were frozen!"

Alas! little Stenne was not trembling from cold, but from fear and shame. Inside they found some soldiers squatting around a wretched fire; a widow's fire it might well have been called, but at its warmth they were endeavoring to thaw out their biscuits at the point of their bayonets. They crowded closer, to make room for the boys, and gave them a swallow of brandy and some coffee. While they were drinking, an officer appeared at the door, called the sergeant, whispered something in a very low voice, and suddenly disappeared.

"Boys!" said the sergeant, returning with a radiant face, "there 'll be fighting this night! The watchword of the Prussians is discovered. This time I believe we shall recapture that cursed Bourget."

There was an outburst of bravos and laughter, dancing and singing and polishing of sword-bayonets; taking advantage of the general uproar, the boys disappeared.

When they had passed the trench, they came to the open plain, and at its extremity ran a long white wall, pierced with loop-holes. Towards this wall the boys directed their footsteps, stopping at every step and making believe that they were gathering potatoes.

"Let us return. Don't go any further," said little Stenne, again and again.

The other shrugged his shoulders, and pushed on without pause.

Suddenly they heard the sharp click of a gun.

"Down!" said the elder, and dropped to the ground. He lay at full length, and whistled. An answering whistle was heard through the snow. They advanced on all fours. In front of the wall and level with the ground, appeared a pair of yellow mustachios, surmounted by a greasy cap. Stenne's companion jumped into the trench and stood by the Prussian's side. "That 's my brother," he said, pointing to his companion.

This brother of his was so small that the Prussian burst out laughing as he looked at him, and was obliged to lift him in his arms to get him as far as the breach.

On the other side of the wall were huge earthworks, felled trees, black holes dug in the snow, and in each hole was a head like the first, with its yellow mustaches, which quivered with laughter as the boys passed by. In one spot stood a gardener's house, casemated with tree-trunks. Downstairs it was filled with soldiers playing cards and making soup before a big fire which burned

merrily. A savory odor of bacon and cabbage ascended. How different all this from the sharpshooters' bivouac! Overhead were the officers' quarters. The sound of a piano was heard. Champagne flowed freely. When the Parisians entered, a joyous hurrah greeted them. They distributed their newspapers. The officers made the boys drink and talk. The bearing of all these officers was proud and insolent, but the elder of the boys amused them with his vulgar wit and street-Arab's vocabulary. They roared as they repeated his words after him, rolling delightedly in the mud of Paris he had brought them.

Little Stenne would have liked to put in a word here and there, to show them he was no fool, but something stopped his tongue. Opposite him, apart from the rest, sat a Prussian who was older, more serious than the others. He was reading, or seemed to be, but his eyes never left the two boys. There was something both tender and reproachful in that look. Had this man a child of his own at home, a child of the same age as Stenne, and did his look say, "I would rather die than see a son of mine bent on such an errand as this"?

From the moment those eyes met his, Stenne felt as if a hand had laid a weight upon his heart and stopped its beating. To forget his agony, he began to drink. Soon everything swam about him. Amid loud bursts of laughter, he could hear in a dazed fashion what his comrade was saying. The latter was ridiculing the National Guard; he mimicked a muster in the Marais and a night-

alarm on the ramparts. Then he lowered his voice, the officers came up closer, and their faces grew grave. The young wretch was about to warn them of the intended attack of the sharpshooters.

But now little Stenne roused himself in a fury. He had suddenly sobered.

"Stop that!" he said. "I won't have it."

The other smiled merely and continued. Before he had finished, all the officers were standing. One of them showed the boys the door, saying, —

"Off with you!"

They began to talk among themselves very rapidly, and in German. The big boy marched out, proud as a doge, jingling his money. Stenne followed him, hanging his head. And as he passed by the Prussian whose glance had disturbed his peace of mind so greatly, he heard a sad voice saying, —

"*Bas chôli, ça. Bas chôli.*"[1]

Tears sprang to his eyes.

Once on the plain again, the boys began to run, and their return was rapid. Their bag was full of potatoes the Prussians had given them, and carrying it they passed the trench where the sharpshooters were, without being stopped. The men were preparing for the attack of the coming night. Troops were arriving silently, and forming behind the walls. The old sergeant was there, busied in arranging his men. How happy he looked! As the boys passed, he recognized them and smiled kindly.

[1] "That was a mean business! a mean business!"

Oh, how that smile tortured little Stenne! For a moment he longed to cry out, "Don't go there to-night! We have betrayed you." But the other had said, "If you speak, we shall be shot," and fear kept him silent.

At La Corneuve they went into a deserted house to share their money. Truth compels me to state that the division was an honest one, and that when little Stenne heard all those fine franc-pieces rattling in his blouse and thought of all those games of *galoche* which he saw in the near future, his crime did not so much appall him.

But when at last the wretched child was alone! After they had passed the gates and his companion left him, then his pockets began to grow heavy indeed. And the hand which had pressed so heavily upon his heart, pressed more heavily than ever. And Paris no longer seemed to him the same Paris. Passers-by seemed to gaze at him severely, as if they knew whence he came. Even the sound of carriage-wheels and the flourish of drums, where the troops were drilling along the canal, seemed to be saying that one word "Spy!" At last he reached his home, glad to discover that his father had not yet returned. He ascended quickly to their chamber, and hid the money which weighed him down so heavily.

Never had Father Stenne felt more amiably disposed or happier than he did, returning home that evening. For good news had just come from the country outside of Paris; affairs were going better. And as he ate, the old soldier looked at his gun

hanging on the wall, and said to the child, with that charming smile of his, —

"Well, boy! you should fight the Prussians if you were old enough!" Towards eight o'clock the cannonade began.

"It is at Aubervilliers. They are fighting at Bourget," said the worthy man, who knew all his forts well. Little Stenne grew pale, and, pretending that he was very tired, he went to bed, but he could not sleep. For the booming of the cannons never ceased. He pictured to himself the sharpshooters, reaching by night the spot where they were to surprise the Prussians and falling into an ambuscade themselves. He recalled the sergeant who had smiled at him, and thought of him lying out there in the snow, and so many, so many beside him. And the blood-money was there, concealed under his pillow; and it was he, the son of Monsieur Stenne, a soldier who had — tears choked him. In the side room, he heard his father pace to and fro. He opened a window. In the square below, the call to arms sounded. A battalion of mobiles, about to set out, were calling their numbers. Yes, this was a battle in real earnest. The wretched child could not restrain a sob.

"What ails you?" asked Father Stenne, entering the room.

The child could control himself no longer. He jumped from his bed and would have thrown himself at his father's feet. But his sudden movement sent the money rolling upon the floor.

"What is that? Have you been stealing?" asked the old man, and he trembled.

Then without pausing to take breath, little Stenne told him all that had happened in that visit to the Prussians, and what share he had had in it. And, by degrees, as he told his story he seemed to breathe more freely, that silent accuser in his heart ceased to torture him.

Father Stenne's face, as he listened, was terrible. When he had heard the last word, he buried his face in his hands and wept.

"Father, father!" the child tried to say.

But the old man pushed the boy away from him without a word, and began to pick up the money.

"Is this all?" he asked.

Little Stenne nodded. The old man took down his gun and his cartridge-box, and put the money in his pocket.

"Very well," he said; "I will return it to them."

And without another word, without looking back a single time, he descended, and went out into the night, and mingled with the mobiles who were leaving. He was never seen again.

THE MOTHER.

A SOUVENIR OF THE SIEGE.

THAT morning I had gone to Mont Valérien to see our artist-friend, Monsieur B——, then a lieutenant in the mobile of the Seine. I found that fine fellow on guard. No way of getting out of it! And there he was, compelled to pace back and forth, before the postern of the fort, like a sailor on watch, while we talked of Paris, of the war, and of dear ones far away. Suddenly my lieutenant, who, in spite of his military coat, was as tremendous a dauber as ever, stopped short in the middle of his sentence, and caught my arm.

"There's a fine Daumier!" he whispered. He was looking at something out of the corner of one eye, and that small gray eye of his kindled like a hunting-dog's, as he pointed to the silhouette of two venerable figures that had just made their appearance upon the plateau of Mont Valérien.

And indeed the couple suggested some fine sketch fresh from Daumier's hand. The man wore a chestnut-colored surtout, with a collar of greenish velvet, that looked like old wood-moss; he was short and lean and ruddy, with a low forehead, round eyes, and nose like an owl's beak; his head was like a shrivelled bird's head, and his air was at

once silly and solemn. To complete the picture, he carried on one arm a bag, embroidered with flowers, from which protruded the neck of a bottle, and under the other arm a box of preserves, that everlasting tin box, which Parisians of those days will never see again without recalling that five months' siege of theirs. Of the woman all that one saw at first was an enormous hood-like bonnet and an old shawl whose scanty folds wrapped her from head to foot, revealing all the more plainly the poverty it attempted to conceal; now and then, however, the tip of a sharp nose peered out from the faded ruches of her bonnet, and a few spare and grizzled locks could be seen.

When they reached the plateau, the man paused to regain his breath, and to wipe his forehead. They certainly could not have been too warm in that foggy, keen November air, but they had walked very quickly.

The woman never paused, not she! Advancing directly towards the postern, she looked at us a moment, with some hesitation, and as if she would speak with us; but, doubtless intimidated by an officer's uniform, she preferred to address the sentinel, and I heard her ask timidly that she might be allowed to see her son, a Paris mobile in Company Six, Third Battalion.

"Stay here," said the guard, "and I will call him."

She gave a joyous sigh of relief, and returned to her husband, and both seated themselves at a short distance, on the side of a talus.

They waited there an interminable time. Mont Valérien is so big, such a complicated affair, with its various enclosures, its bastions, glacis, barracks, and casemates! No easy task to find a mobile of the Sixth in the mazes of that town suspended between heaven and earth, hanging its huge spiral in the midst of the clouds, like Laputa's island. Moreover, at that hour from one end to the other of the fort drums and trumpets are sounding, canteens rattling. The sentry is relieved, duty-service begins, supplies are distributed; the sharp-shooters are bringing in a spy, covered with blood, beating him with their gun-butts. Some peasant folk of Nanterre are come to complain to the General; an estafette comes galloping in, the man chilled, and the beast dripping with sweat. Litters arrive from the outposts with the wounded suspended upon the backs of mules, and moaning softly like sick lambs. Sailors are seen hauling a new cannon to the music of a fife, with cries of "Heave ho!" A shepherd in red trousers is driving in before him the cattle belonging to the fort, a rod in his hand, his chassepot slung across his shoulder. In the yards of the fort an incessant coming and going, men passing one another, and disappearing through the postern like figures vanishing through the low door of some caravansary of the East.

"I hope they have not forgotten my boy," the poor mother's eyes are saying all this time; and as the minutes lengthen she rises and discreetly approaches the entrance, casting a furtive glance towards the front yard, while she edges along the

wall, but she dares not ask any more questions, lest she should reflect discredit upon her son. Her companion, more timid even than herself, does not budge once from the spot where he is seated; and when she returns again and again, to seat herself beside him, her heart swelling, and a look of deep discouragement visible upon her features, it is plain that he is chiding her for her impatience, and giving her no end of explanations as to the exigencies of a soldier's life, information imparted with the imbecile air of one who would have you think he knows it all.

I have always regarded with the deepest curiosity those little domestic scenes enacted amid the utmost silence, scenes of whose significance one often divines more than is actually seen, — in those pantomimes of the street, which elbow us on every side during our walks abroad, the merest gesture often revealing to us the history of a lifetime; but what specially charmed me here was the awkwardness, the naïveté of my principal characters, and it was with real emotion I witnessed all the incidents of a delightful drama of the hearth, as I followed that little dumb-show, as expressive and transparent as the pantomime of two of Seraphin's marionettes. I seemed to hear the mother remark one fine morning, "I am sick of this Monsieur Trochu, and his orders. I have not seen my boy for three months. I want to see him, to kiss him."

And the father, timorous, with an eternal air of apology for the fact of his existence, is frightened at the mere thought of what must be done in order

to obtain permission to see the son, and at first attempts to dissuade her. "But, my dear, you don't stop to think! Mont Valérien — deuce take it! — is a long way off. How could you ever get there without a carriage? Besides, it is a citadel. Women are not allowed to enter."

"But — I will enter — " answers the wife; and as he obeys all her commands, he undertakes this new errand. He goes to the *Secteur*, to the *mairie*, to the headquarters of the Army of Paris, to the commissary, clammy with fear, shivering with the cold, knocking at every door, stumbling into the wrong one again and again, waiting in line two hours before the office of one department, and that not the right one. But at last he returns towards evening with the Governor's permit in his pocket. The next day they rise very early, and dress in the cold, by lamp-light. The father nibbles a bit of bread, to fortify himself, but the mother is not hungry. She prefers to breakfast later with her son. And to cheer the poor mobile a little, they pile into the bag both the ordinary provisions of the siege and those reserved for special occasions, chocolate, sweetmeats, and a bottle of wine; they remember everything, even the famous box, an eight-franc box, which they had laid aside religiously for a day of need. At last they have started. When they reach the ramparts, and the gates are opened, they must show their permit. And now it is the wife's turn to be frightened. But she is reassured. The permit, it seems, is quite *en règle.*

"You may pass," says the adjutant on duty.

And not until then does she breathe freely.

"How polite that officer was to us!"

She toddles on, as agile as a young partridge. The man can scarcely keep up with her.

"How fast you walk, my dear!"

But she is not listening to him. Above her Mont Valérien looms against the misty horizon, and beckons to her.

"Come quickly. He is here!"

And now they have reached Mont Valérien, a fresh cause for anxiety. Suppose she should not find him! What if he is not coming, after all!

Suddenly I saw her tremble, clutch the old man's arm, and spring to her feet. In the distance footsteps were heard echoing along the vaulted passage, footsteps which she recognized. It was her son! When he appeared, the entrance to the fort was suddenly illumined for her eyes.

And indeed he was a big, splendid fellow, his bearing erect and vigorous. He came, gun in hand and knapsack on his back. His greeting was sincere, as the joyous, virile voice exclaimed, —

"Good-morning, mamma."

And suddenly knapsack, blanket, chassepot, and all disappeared from sight, and were lost in that enormous bonnet. Then the father's turn came, but it did not last so long, for the bonnet wanted everything for itself. It was insatiable.

"And how are you? Are you clad warmly enough? How are you off for linen?"

And beneath the ruches of that bonnet I could see her eyes, and their prolonged and loving glance

which embraced him from head to foot, amid a shower of tears and little laughs and kisses. For there was an arrearage of three long months due him, — an arrearage which maternal tenderness was striving to pay him all at once. The father too seemed deeply moved, but he did not desire that any one should suspect the fact. He understood that we were watching him, and blinked once or twice in our direction, as if to say, —

"You must excuse her. She 's a woman."

As if I could excuse her!

But the sound of a bugle interrupted all this joy unexpectedly.

"The call!" said the youth. "I must go."

"What! You will not take your breakfast with us?"

"I cannot. I am on duty for the next twenty-four hours, above, at the fort."

"Oh!" said the poor woman, and she was speechless.

And in consternation each gazed at the other for a moment. Then the father was spokesman.

"At least you will take the box," he said in a heart-broken voice, with an air of gluttony and of martyrdom which was at once touching and ludicrous. But in the agitation and emotion of leave-taking, that infernal box was nowhere to be found! It was pathetic to see those feeble and trembling hands groping for it, and to hear two voices, broken by sobs, inquiring: "The box! Where is the box?" — evidently considering this petty and homely detail not unworthy of their great sorrow.

But at last the box was found, there was one long, last embrace, and then the son returned to the fort on the run.

But recall how far they had come to breakfast with him, and that it was to have been a great affair in their lives, that the mother had not slept one minute the night before, in anticipation of it, and tell me whether anything could be more pathetic than that little party which never came off, that momentary glimpse of a paradise whose door was so suddenly, so brutally, closed against them.

They lingered for some minutes, standing motionless in the spot where the boy had left them, their eyes riveted upon the postern through which he had disappeared from their sight. At length the man roused himself, and made a move towards departure. He coughed very courageously two or three times, and his voice gaining confidence, he said quite audibly and cheerfully, —

"Come, mother, let us go." Then he made us an overwhelming courtesy, and took his wife's arm. My eyes followed them as far as the turn in the road. The good man's air was furious. He brandished his bag, and his gestures were full of despair. The mother herself appeared to be calmer. She walked beside him, her head sunken upon her breast, her arms at her side. But I fancied that from time to time the shawl which covered her thin shoulders rose and fell convulsively.

THE SIEGE OF BERLIN.

WE ascended the Avenue des Champs Élysées with Doctor V——, reading, upon those walls pierced with shells and sidewalks dug up with grapeshot, the story of the Siege of Paris. Just before we reached the Rondpoint de l'Étoile, the Doctor paused, and pointing out to me one of those great corner-houses which face the Arc de Triomphe with such a pompous air, he said, —

"Do you see those four closed windows up there over the balcony? In the early part of the month of August of last year, that awful month full of storm and disaster, I was summoned to that apartment to attend a severe case of apoplexy. My patient was Colonel Jouve, an old cuirassier of the First Empire. Love of country was his ruling passion, and his mistress was Glory. At the beginning of the war he had taken up quarters in the Champs Élysées in that apartment with the balcony. Do you guess why? That he might witness the triumphal re-entry of our troops. Poor old man! The news of Wissembourg reached his ears just as he was rising from table. He saw the name of Napoleon at the end of that bulletin of defeat, and the sudden shock prostrated him.

"When I reached the old cuirassier, he was stretched at full length upon the carpet of his

room. His face gave no signs of life, but it was bleeding as if he had received a tremendous blow upon the head. Standing he must have presented an imposing figure. As he lay there, he looked like a giant. His features were so noble, his silvery locks curled so thickly, he had such splendid teeth, that this octogenarian looked scarcely more than sixty years of age. Near him knelt his granddaughter in tears. She resembled him strongly. The sight of both together suggested two beautiful Greek medals struck from the same impression; but one was old and dull, its outlines somewhat worn, while the other was bright and clear-cut, having all the smoothness and brilliancy of a first impression.

"The child's grief touched me. Her grandfather had been a soldier. Her father too was a soldier, an officer of MacMahon's staff; and at sight of this stately old hero prostrate, my imagination pictured a scene not less terrible. I did my best to reassure her, but at heart I felt no hope. We had to deal with a severe case of hemiplegia, and at eighty recovery is extremely doubtful. And, in fact, for three days the sick man never rallied from the stupor in which I had found him. Meanwhile news of the battle Reichshoffen had just reached Paris. You will remember how strangely we were deceived. Until evening we all believed a great victory had been gained, twenty thousand Prussians slain, the prince royal a prisoner. Through some agency scarcely less than miraculous, some echo of the nation's joy must have reached the patient, deaf

and dumb though he was, some magnetic current must have penetrated even that paralyzed frame, for that evening, when I approached his bedside, I saw that he was a new man. His eye was clear almost, his tongue no longer thick. He was able to smile, and twice he stammered 'Vic-to-ry!'

"'Yes, colonel, a great victory!'

"And as I acquainted him with the details of MacMahon's glorious success, his features relaxed, his face brightened.

"As I was about to leave the apartment, I found the young girl waiting for me. She was weeping. 'But he is out of danger!' I said, taking her hands in mine.

"The unhappy child scarcely ventured a reply. The bulletins had just announced the true story of Reichshoffen. MacMahon was retreating, the army cut to pieces. Our eyes could not conceal the consternation both felt. The child was heart-broken. She was thinking of her father. But I trembled at thought of the old man. Surely he could not survive this fresh shock. But what should we do? Leave him to enjoy that happiness, those illusions which had breathed new life into him? But in that case we must feed him upon lies. 'Very well, I will lie to him!' said the young heroine, quickly drying her eyes, and her face was wreathed in smiles when she returned to her grandfather's chamber.

"She had undertaken no light task. During the first days it was not so difficult a matter, for the good man's head was very weak, and he was as

easily deceived as a child. But as health returned, his ideas grew clearer. It was necessary to keep him informed of the movement of the various armies, and to manufacture military bulletins for him. And it was truly pitiable to see that lovely child buried night and day in a map of Germany, pinning tiny flags upon it, endeavoring to invent the details of a glorious campaign. Bazaine had advanced upon Berlin, Froissart was in Bavaria, MacMahon on the Baltic! Sometimes she consulted me, and I aided her as far as I could, but in carrying out this imaginary invasion no one rendered us greater assistance than the grandfather himself. He had conquered Germany so many times during the First Empire! He knew every move in advance. 'This is where they will go next!' 'This will be their next move,' he would say; and his anticipations never failing to prove themselves correct, he took not a little pride in them.

"'But, alas! to no avail did we take cities, win battles. We did not move rapidly enough to suit him. That old man was simply insatiable. Every day I visited him I heard news of some fresh exploit.

"'Doctor, we have taken Mayence,' said the young girl, advancing towards me with a heart-rending smile, and through the door I heard a joyous voice exclaiming, 'We move! we move! in a week more we shall enter Berlin.'

"As a matter of fact, the Prussians would reach Paris in another week. We asked ourselves at

first whether it would not be better to remove our patient from the city, but, once outside of Paris, the condition of France would have told him all; moreover, he was too weak, too much benumbed from the effect of the first shock, to learn the truth then. It was decided to remain.

"The first day of the investment of the city, I climbed up to my patient's apartment. Well I remember that day! My heart was heavy, full of anguish. For the gates of Paris were closed, the enemy under her very walls, and even her outskirts converted into frontiers. I found the ingenuous old man sitting up in bed, proud and jubilant.

"'Well,' he said, 'at last the *siege* has begun!'

"I looked at him; I was stunned. 'Why, colonel,' I asked, 'how do you know that?'

"His granddaughter glanced in my direction.

"'Oh, yes, doctor; this is great news! The siege of Berlin has begun.'

"And as she spoke, she plied her needle with a little affectation of composure. How should he suspect anything? Though the cannons were firing from the forts, he could not hear them. And although unhappy Paris was turned upside down, and filled with gloom and forebodings, he saw nothing of it all. But where he lay, he could get a glimpse of the Arc de Triomphe, and his chamber was filled with bric-à-brac of the First Empire, admirably fitted to nourish his illusions. Portraits of marshals were there, engravings of battles; there was a picture of the *King of Rome* in baby

robes. There were tall, stiff consoles ornamented with trophied brass, and loaded with imperial relics, medallions, bronzes; there was a bit of the rock of St. Helena under a glass globe; there were numerous miniatures always representing the same lady, in ball-room costume, in a yellow robe with leg-of-mutton sleeves, a pair of bright eyes glancing from beneath her carefully curled locks.

"All these ornaments, the King of Rome, the marshals, the yellow ladies, those short-waisted, high-girdled figures whose stiff and artificial lines were considered the very embodiment of grace in 1806 — gallant colonel! — it was such things as those, it was that atmosphere of victory and conquest, which, far more than any words of ours, made him accept the story of the siege of Berlin with such childlike simplicity.

"From that day, our military operations were far less complex. To take Berlin was simply a question of patience. From time to time, when the old man grew weary of waiting, we would read him a letter from his son, of course, an imaginary letter, for Paris was cut off from the outer world then, and, besides, since the battle of Sedan, MacMahon's aide-de-camp was confined in a German fortress. You may imagine that poor child's despair, living from day to day with no news of her father, but knowing that he was a prisoner, deprived of everything, sick, perhaps, — imagine her agony knowing all this, but compelled to speak for him, to invent such joyous epistles in his behalf, a trifle brief, perhaps, but the brevity of a soldier in the field,

who answers his country's cry, 'Forward!' and sees her arms everywhere victorious. Sometimes she had not the heart for these letters, and then weeks passed without news. But the old man would grow restless and could not sleep. Then a letter would at once arrive from Germany, and she would read it gayly at his bedside, repressing her tears. The colonel always listened religiously, with a very wise air; he approved, criticised, explained to us here and there a passage which seemed slightly obscure. But his finest efforts were replies he sent his son. 'Never forget that you are a Frenchman,' he would say. 'Be generous to these poor people. Invade their country, but not as an oppressor.' Then followed suggestions without end, delightful twaddle concerning a right observance of propriety, and what constituted courtesy towards women, — in short, a whole military code for the guidance of these *conquerors;* he added some reflections upon politics in general, and outlined the conditions of peace which must be imposed upon the vanquished. I must add that, as regards the last subject, his demands were not severe.

"'A war indemnity, only that; what good would it do to seize their provinces? A France could never be made out of Germany!'

"He dictated these words with a steady voice, with such candor, and such noble faith in his country, that it was impossible to listen to him unmoved.

"And all the while the siege was progressing, not,

alas! that of Berlin. There were days of severe cold, of bombardment, of epidemics and famine. But, thanks to our cares, our efforts, and all those proofs of indefatigable tenderness which were multiplied about him, the old man never felt a moment's anxiety. To the very end I was able to obtain white bread and fresh meat for him. Of course there was none for any one else, and you cannot imagine anything more touching than this grandfather's breakfasts of which he partook with such innocent egotism, the old man sitting up in bed, fresh and smiling, his napkin under his chin, the granddaughter ever at his side, her pale face revealing the privation she had suffered; she guided his hands, compelled him to drink, aided him as he ate all the good things saved specially for him. Enlivened by his repast, enjoying the comfort of his warm chamber while the cold winter wind blew without, and the snow whirled about his windows, the aged cuirassier would recall his campaigns in the North and related to us for the hundredth time the tale of that mournful retreat from Moscow, when there was no other food than frozen biscuit and horse-flesh.

"'Do you know what that means, child? We ate horse-flesh!' I think she understood perfectly. She had been eating no other meat for two months. From day to day, as convalescence approached, the patient began to make our task a more difficult one. That lethargy of all his senses, of all his limbs, had aided us up to this time, but was beginning to leave him. Several times those terrible

volleys from the Porte Maillot made him start suddenly, his ear as alert as a hound's: we were obliged to invent a final victory for Bazaine before Berlin, and to explain that the salutes in front of Les Invalides were in honor of the event. Another day, when we had pushed his bed close to the window, I think it was the Thursday the battle of Buzenval occurred, he saw the National Guard quite distinctly as it formed in front of the Avenue de la Grande Armée.

"'What troops are those?' asked our colonel, and we heard him mutter to himself, —

"'Badly drilled! badly drilled!'

"Nothing came of this incident, but we realized that it now behooved us to take greater precautions than before. Unfortunately we were not cautious enough.

"One evening on my arrival, the child came to me, her face full of anxiety.

"'To-morrow they enter,' she said.

"Was the door of the grandfather's room ajar? I do remember, and have often thought in recalling that evening, that his features wore an unusual expression. It is very likely that he had heard what we were saying. But we were speaking of the Prussians, and he was thinking of the French army, and of that triumphal entry he had been expecting for many a day, — MacMahon descending the avenue to martial music, along a path strewn with flowers, his son at the marshal's side, and there upon the balcony, the old warrior himself in full uniform, as upon the field of Lutzen, saluting the

flags that had many a rent in them, and our eagles blackened with powder.

"Poor Father Jouve! Doubtless he fancied we would not permit him to assist at that entry of our troops, anxious to spare him the excitement of so great an event. For he said nothing to any one, but the following day, just at the hour when the Prussians advanced somewhat timidly upon the long avenue leading from the Porte Maillot to the Tuileries, an upper window opened softly, and the colonel himself appeared upon the balcony, wearing his helmet, his long cavalry sword, and all the antiquated but glorious toggery of an old cuirassier of Milhaud. I still ask myself what tremendous effort of his will, what sudden start of life, had put him on his feet again, and in all his war trappings. But one fact is certain. There he stood upon the balcony, amazed to find the avenue so wide and still, the blinds of the houses closed, and Paris itself as gloomy as a vast lazaretto, flags everywhere, but strangely enough, only white flags with red crosses, and no one to meet our soldiers.

"For a moment he must have believed he had made a mistake,— but, no! yonder, behind the Arc de Triomphe, issued an indistinct rattle, a black line advanced steadily into the morning light. Then by degrees the tops of helmets could be seen flashing in the sunlight, and the drums of Jena began to beat. And then beneath the Arc de l'Étoile, accented by the rhythmic tramp of the regiments and the clashing of sabres, resounded the strains of Schubert's triumphal march.

"Then through the dismal silence of the place was heard an awful cry, 'To arms! to arms! the Prussians!' and the four uhlans of the advance-guard, looking towards the balcony above, could see the majestic figure of an old man reeling, his arms outstretched. He fell heavily. This time the shock had indeed proved fatal. Colonel Jouve was dead."

A RENEGADE ZOUAVE.

THAT evening the big blacksmith Lory of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines was not in the best of humors. Usually after the forge-fire was out, and the sun had set, he would sit upon a bench before his doorway, tasting all the delight of that weariness which comes to one who has borne the heat and burden of the day. And before dismissing his apprentices, he would linger with them for a few draughts of fresh beer, watching the people going home from the factories. But this evening the worthy smith remained in his shop until meal-time, and then he seemed reluctant to go. His good old wife thought as she looked at him, "What ails him? Has he received some bad news he is unwilling to tell me, from the regiment? Perhaps our oldest is ill." But she did not venture to ask any questions, and confined all her efforts to quieting three little laughing, fair-haired lads with locks the color of ripened wheat, who were crunching a fine salad of black radishes and cream.

At length the blacksmith pushed away his plate angrily.

"Oh, what beggarly knaves, what scoundrels they are!"

"Whom do you mean, tell us, Lory?"

"Whom do I mean?" he exclaimed. "Five or six vagabonds who straggled into the town this morning, wearing the uniforms of French soldiers, but hand in glove with the Bavarians: some of that mob which has — what do they call it? — declared in favor of Prussia; and to think that every day will witness the return of more of these false Alsatians! What do you suppose they gave them to drink?"

The mother attempted a defence.

"What would you have, my poor man? These boys are not so much to blame. Away in Algeria, in Africa, they are so far from home that they grow sick for a sight of it. The temptation to return, to give up a soldier's life, is too strong for them."

Lory's fist descended heavily upon the table.

"No more, mother! You women do not know what you are talking about. So much of your life is spent among children, and for them alone, that you come to see all things through the eyes of your puppets. But I tell you, those men we saw this morning are knaves, renegades, cowards of the worst sort; and if in an evil hour our Christian could be capable of such infamy as theirs, as sure as my name is George Lory, and I was for seven years a chasseur in the service of France, I would run him through the body with my sabre."

Partly risen from his chair, the blacksmith pointed with a terrible glance to his long cavalry sword, hanging upon the wall under his son's picture, the portrait of a zouave, done in Africa.

But as he looked at that honest Alsatian face, dark and sunburnt, viewed in the strong relief which is shown when vivid colors are seen in a strong light, suddenly he grew calm.

"I am foolish to work myself into a passion! As if our Christian could dream of becoming a Prussian, — he who has killed so many of them during the war."

Restored to good humor by this thought, the worthy man finished his meal with a light heart, and set forth at once for the Ville de Strasbourg, to empty a pot or two of beer.

The old wife was alone. She put the little ones to bed, while they chirped like a nestful of birds going to rest, and then she took her darning, and seated herself before the door leading to the garden. She sighed from time to time, and thought to herself, —

"Oh, yes; that is all true enough. They are cowards, renegades. All the same, their mothers must be glad enough to see them again."

And she recalled the time when her boy, before he left for the army, stood in that little garden, tending it, at that very hour. She looked at the well where he had refilled his watering-pots, — that boy in the blouse and long locks, those locks which had to be cut when he entered the ranks of the zouaves.

Suddenly she trembles. The little back door that leads to the fields is opened.

The dogs do not bark, though the new-comer steals along the walls, among the beehives, like a robber.

"Good-day, mamma!"

Her Christian himself stands before her, shamefaced, confused; his tongue is thick, his uniform disordered.

The miserable creature has come with the others, and for a whole hour he has been prowling about, waiting for his father to leave the house, that he might enter it. She would chide him, but has not the heart. It is such a long while since she saw him, embraced him last. And then he has so many and such excellent reasons to give for returning, — he longed for home, for the forge, was weary of living so far away from his people; the discipline grew severer every day, and the others nicknamed him "Prussian!" because of his Alsatian accent. Of course she believes everything he says. How can she help it when she looks in his face? They continue to talk, as they enter the house.

The little ones are awake by this time, and, barefooted, in their night-shirts, they patter into the room, eager to welcome their big brother! He must eat something, but, no, he is not hungry. His thirst, however, knows no end; he has been drinking in the pothouse since morning, treated to round upon round of beer and white wine, and now he washes it all down with great gulps of water.

But a step is heard in the yard. The blacksmith is returning.

"Christian, it is your father! Quick, hide, until I have had time to speak to him, to explain!"

And she pushes him behind the tall porcelain

stove, and then turns to her sewing again with trembling hands. But, unfortunately, his zouave's cap is still upon the table, and that is the first object Lory's eyes meet as he enters. He observes, too, the mother's embarrassment, her pale face, and he understands everything.

"Christian is here!" he says; and the tone of his voice strikes terror to their hearts. He seizes his sabre with the gesture of a maniac, and rushes towards the stove behind which the zouave cowers, a ghastly figure, suddenly sobered, but leaning against the wall, lest he should fall.

The mother throws herself between them.

"Lory, Lory, do not kill him! It is my fault. I wrote him to return, wrote him that you needed him in the forge."

She clings to his arm and drags herself along, sobbing. In the darkness of their chamber the children hear sobs and angry words; these voices, overcome with emotion, they no longer recognize, and they too begin to cry. Suddenly the blacksmith pauses, and looks at his wife.

"Then he returned because you made him! Very well! Let him get to bed. To-morrow I will consider what shall be done."

On awaking the next morning from a heavy slumber, full of nightmare and baseless terrors, Christian finds himself in the very chamber he occupied in childhood. The flowering hop-vines, climbing along the tiny leaden-framed panes of his window, shut out some of the daylight, but the sun is warm, for already it is high in the heavens.

Below, the anvils are ringing. At the head of his bed sits his mother. Through the long night, she has not quitted his side one moment, for her husband's wrath has made her fear. And the old man himself has not slept. Till daybreak his footsteps are heard through the house; he opens and closes one closet after another, weeping and sighing. And now he enters his son's room. His face is stern. It seems that he is dressed for a journey. He wears a tall hat and long gaiters; he carries a thick mountain-staff tipped with iron. He proceeds at once to the bed where his son lies, saying, "Come, rise! It is time to get up!"

The youth, a trifle confused, is about to put on his Zouave trappings.

"Oh, no, not those!" the father says severely.

The mother, all apprehension, replies, "But, my friend, he has no others to wear."

"Give him some of mine. I shall not need them any more."

And as his son dresses, Lory carefully folds the uniform, the big red trousers, the short jacket, and having made a bundle of them, he passes about his neck the tin box which contains his soldier's-papers.

"And now let us go down," he says. Then the three descend into the blacksmith's shop. No word is spoken. As they enter, they hear the bellows blowing. Every one is at work. And as he sees that open shed which he had so often recalled while he was far away, the Zouave remembers his childhood, and how he played there many

an hour in the heat of the road, and how the sparks glittered against the black, powdery dust of the forge. Sudden tenderness fills his heart. He longs for his father's forgiveness, but the look which meets his is inexorable.

And now the smith finds words.

"Boy," he says, "the forge and the tools are yours. And that too," he adds, pointing to the little garden in the rear, which is seen from the smoke-blackened door, bathed in sunshine, and swarming with bees.

"The hives, the vines, the house, all belong to you. Since it was for these things you sacrificed your honor, you will at least look after them. You are master here now. I go. You owe France five years more of service. I will pay your debt."

"Lory, Lory, where are you going?" cries the poor wife.

"Father!" exclaims the son, his voice full of entreaty. But the blacksmith is gone while they are speaking. He strides out of sight without one glance backward.

At Sidi-bel-Abbès, where the Third Regiment of Zouaves is stationed, there enlisted some days ago a volunteer aged fifty-five years.

THE CLOCK OF BOUGIVAL.

FROM BOUGIVAL TO MUNICH.

It was a clock of the Second Empire, one of those timepieces in Algerian onyx, ornamented with Campana designs, — such a clock as may be purchased on the Boulevard des Italiens, its tiny gilt key dangling crosswise at the end of a pink ribbon. A genuine Parisian novelty, the frailest, daintiest, most modern of things, — a real opera bouffe clock, chiming with a charming silvery sweetness, but possessing not one least grain of common-sense, and full of caprices and crotchets, striking the hours after an impossible fashion of its own, skipping the half-hours, just knowing enough to announce for Monsieur the hour when he must go to the Bourse, and for Madame the propitious, eagerly awaited moment. When the war broke out, this timepiece was rusticating at Bougival, created especially for one of those fragile summer-palaces, those butterfly cages, with paper frills, — migratory establishments that are not meant to outlast a season, but adorned with lace, muslin, and light silken transparencies. After the arrival of the Bavarians it was one of the first prizes to be carried off, and really it must be acknowledged that these people from over the Rhine had no little

skill at packing, for that plaything of a clock, scarcely bigger than a turtle-dove's egg, was able to make that journey from Bougival to Munich, in the midst of Krupp guns and carts loaded with grapeshot, arriving safe and sound, and on the very next day showed its face in the shop-window of Augustus Cahn, dealer in curiosities, Odeon-Platz, as fresh, as coquettish as ever, with its two delicate hands black and curved as two eyelashes, and its gilt key still dangling crosswise at the end of a new ribbon.

THE ILLUSTRIOUS DOCTOR-PROFESSOR OTTO VON SCHWANTHALER.

THIS arrival was an event for Munich. No one there had ever seen a Bougival clock before; every one came to look at it, regarding it with as much curiosity as the Japanese shells in the Sieboid museum afforded. In front of Augustus Cahn's store spectators stood three rows deep, smoking their pipes from morning till night, and the good people of Munich, their eyes bulging out of their heads, asked each other with many an astounded "*Mein Gott!*" to what use this singular little machine might be put. Illustrated journals printed pictures of it. Its photograph was in every window, and in its honor did the illustrious Doctor-Professor Otto von Schwanthaler compose his famous *Paradox upon Clocks*, a philosophico-humoristic study of six

hundred pages, which treats of the influence of clocks upon the character of various nationalities, and logically demonstrates that a nation so senseless as to regulate the employment of its time by such erratic chronometers as that clock of Bougival, could no more expect to escape every sort of catastrophe than a ship which should put to sea with its compass gone astray. (The phrase is a trifle long, but I have translated it literally.)

Once engaged upon an investigation, the Germans do not trifle with it, and before writing his *Paradox*, the illustrious Doctor-Professor was anxious to have the subject of his researches under his eyes, that he might study it thoroughly, and analyze it to the minutest details, with the zeal of an entomologist; and so he purchased the clock, and that explains how it passed from Augustus Cahn's store into the salon of the illustrious Doctor-Professor Otto von Schwanthaler, custodian of the Pinakothek, and member of the Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts, and was installed in his private residence, 24 Ludwigstrasse.

THE SCHWANTHALER SALON.

THAT which one was sure to observe first of all in entering the Schwanthaler salon, solemn and academic as a conference-hall, was a tall marble clock, severely classic in detail, but having a bronze Polymnia, and extremely complicated machinery.

Its large face encircled a number of smaller ones; the hours, the minutes, and the seasons were represented; the equinoxes and even the phases of the moon could be seen in a bright blue cloud on the base of this timepiece, in the centre. The sound of this mighty machine filled the whole house. Even at the foot of the stairs, its pendulum could be heard, swinging ponderously to and fro, with solemn emphasis, seeming to measure and divide life itself into fragments of equal length. Through that sonorous tick-tock throbbed the vibrations of the hand which marked the seconds, as it went round and round its face, with the feverish energy of a spider fully aware of the value of time.

Then the hour would strike sadly and slowly as a college-clock, and its striking always announced some event in the Schwanthaler household. At that precise moment Herr von Schwanthaler set out for the Pinakothek, loaded with papers, or his honored lady had just returned from a sermon with her daughters, three lank, much-befrilled girls, who looked like hop-poles; sometimes the clock announced that it was time for the dancing-lesson, the zither lesson, or for gymnastics; prompt on the hour, the piano was opened, the embroidery-frame brought forth, or music-stands were rolled into the salon, and ensemble-music began; and every act of this household was so methodical, orderly, and well-regulated that the spectator who observed all these Schwanthalers set in motion on the exact stroke of the clock, coming in or going

out through the opened folding-doors, might have fancied he saw before him that procession of the Apostles in the Clock of Strasbourg, might have expected that upon the last stroke the entire Schwanthaler family would re-enter and disappear forever in their clock.

SINGULAR INFLUENCE OF THE BOUGIVAL CLOCK UPON AN HONEST FAMILY OF MUNICH.

NOW it was beside that monument they placed the clock from Bougival, and you can easily imagine the effect that saucy bit of fragile finery produced! One evening, as the Schwanthaler ladies were busied with their embroidery in the large salon, and the illustrious Doctor-Professor was reading to some of his colleagues of the Academy of Sciences the first pages of the *Paradox*, pausing from time to time to lift the little clock and to make, as it were, a blackboard demonstration concerning it, suddenly Eva von Schwanthaler, impelled by I know not what accursed curiosity, said to her father, blushing slightly, —

"O papa, make it ring!"

The doctor detached the key, turned it twice, and a crystalline sound was heard, so silvery, clear, and bright that a sudden quiver of gaiety passed through that solemn assemblage. All eyes sparkled.

"Is n't it pretty, is n't it pretty?" exclaimed the young ladies, tossing their braids with such a lively little air that one could scarcely recognize them.

Then Herr von Schwanthaler observed triumphantly, —

"Look at that crazy little French clock! It has just struck eight, and the hour-hand is at three."

Every one laughed at this, and notwithstanding the lateness of the hour, the gentlemen plunged into philosophical theories and interminable reflections upon the frivolity of the French people. Every one forgot that it was time to go home, deaf even to Polymnia's dial announcing ominously that it was ten o'clock, the hour which ordinarily dispersed the assembled guests. The great clock could not understand what it all meant. Never before had it seen such hilarity in the Schwanthaler residence; never had it seen people lingering so late in the salon. And, shocking to relate, when the Misses Schwanthaler had retired to their room, they had sat up so late, and laughed so much, that they felt a hollow, empty sensation in the stomach, as if they were really hungry, and the sentimental Minna herself, with arms outstretched, exclaimed, —

"Ah, I believe I could eat a lobster-claw!"

"LET US BE GAY, CHILDREN, LET US BE GAY!"

ONCE it was wound up, the Bougival clock fell into its old, irregular life, its habits of dissipation.

They had begun by laughing at its crotchets, but by degrees, growing accustomed to that charming chime, which sounded according to caprice and never told the right time, the serious Schwanthaler family lost all regard for time, and spent their days with delightful unconcern. They thought now of nothing but amusement. Human life seemed so short, since they no longer kept run of the hours. Everything was turned upside down. No more sermons, no more studies! They felt the need of excitement, of stir. Mendelssohn and Schumann had grown too monotonous, and were replaced with *La Grande Duchesse*, and *Le Petit Faust*, and the Fräuleins strummed and strummed and danced, while even the illustrious Doctor-Professor, seized with a sort of vertigo, was able only to say, "Let us be gay, children, let us be gay!" As for the big clock, it was a thing of the past. The young ladies had stopped the pendulum, pretending that it kept them from sleeping, and the household was run according to the caprice of that timepiece which struck one hour when it marked another.

And then appeared the famous *Paradox upon Clocks*. On this occasion the Schwanthalers gave a great soirée, not one of those academic evenings such as they once enjoyed, quiet, and not too brilliant, but a magnificent masquerade-ball, at which Frau von Schwanthaler and her three daughters appeared as *canotières* of Bougival, bare-armed and in short skirts and tiny hats with gaudy ribbons. All this was soon the talk of the town, but it was merely the beginning. Tableaux-vivants,

late suppers and baccarat, — scandalized Munich witnessed one thing after another that winter in the academician's salon. "Let us be gay, children, let us be gay!" repeated the poor man, utterly distracted, and, indeed, they were all extremely gay. Frau von Schwanthaler, become fashionable since her success as a *canotière*, passed her days upon the Isar, wearing extravagant costumes. Her daughters, left at home, took French lessons of some hussar officers imprisoned in the city, and the little clock, having every reason for believing itself still at Bougival, continued to ring at random, always striking eight when the hand stood at three. At last, one morning, this mad whirl of folly carried off the entire Schwanthaler family to America, and the finest Titians of the Pinakothek followed their illustrious custodian in his flight.

CONCLUSION.

AFTER the departure of the Schwanthalers, a perfect epidemic of scandals broke out in Munich. First, a canoness eloped with a baritone; the Dean of the Institute wedded a ballet-dancer; an Aulic councillor was caught cheating at cards; and the convent established for noble women was closed because of a nocturnal disturbance.

Oh, depravity of inanimate things! It would seem that this little clock had some magic power, and that it had resolved to bewitch all Bavaria. Wherever it went, wherever that giddy but charm-

ing little chime sounded, it distracted people, turned their heads. At last, passing from one place to another, it took up its abode in the Royal Residence. And since that day, do you know the name of that score which lies, always open, upon the piano of King Louis, the rabid Wagnerian?

"*Die Meistersänger?*"

"No! *Le Phoque à ventre blanc!* Just the thing to teach them how to use our clocks!"

THE DEFENCE OF TARASCON.

GOD be praised! at last, news of Tarascon! For five months I have merely existed, such was my state of suspense! Knowing the exaltation of that good town, knowing the bellicose humor of its inhabitants, I said to myself again and again, Who can tell what Tarascon has been doing? May it not have rushed in a body upon the barbarians, been bombarded like Strasbourg, burned alive like Châteaudun? Perhaps, like Paris, it is dying of hunger! Perhaps, like Laôn and its intrepid citadel, it has been blown up in a savage paroxysm of patriotism. None of these things, my friends. Tarascon has not been burned, Tarascon is not blown up! Tarascon is where it has always been, its peaceful site surrounded by vineyards, the glad sunshine flooding its streets, its cellars full of fine Muscat, and the Rhône, which bathes that amiable locality, bears to the sea, as of old, the image of a prosperous town; and on the river's shining surface may still be seen the reflection of green blinds, and well-raked gardens, and militia, in new coats, drilling all along the quay.

But do not suppose for a moment that Tarascon has been sitting with hands folded during the war. On the contrary, it has behaved admirably, and its

heroic resistance, which I shall attempt to describe to you, deserves its place in history as a type of local resistance, a living symbol of the defence of the South!

THE SINGING-SOCIETIES.

I WILL admit that, until Sedan was fought, our gallant Tarasconians stayed at home, and their sentiments were quite peaceful. These proud sons of the Alpilles never considered that possibly the Fatherland had received its death-blow on this battlefield. It was the Empire, and the Emperor's soldiers that were perishing. But once the Fourth of September had come and the Republic, with Attila encamped about Paris, ah! then it was that Tarascon awoke, and perceived this was naught else than a national war! Of course it began with a demonstration on the part of the Singing-Societies. You know what a passion for music they have in the South. At Tarascon especially it becomes a perfect frenzy. In the streets, as you pass, all the windows are singing at you, and every balcony drops romantic lays upon your head!

No matter what shop you enter, at the desk there is always a guitar sighing, and even the apothecary's boys, as they serve you, whistle "The Nightingale," and "The Spanish Lute" — *Tra la la! la la la!* And, as if these private concerts were not enough, the Tarasconese have also a town brass band, a college band, and I dare not say how many singing-societies.

It was Saint Christopher's singing-society and its admirable three-part chorus, "On, to save France!" which struck the first note of the national movement.

"Yes, yes! — On to save France!" cried the worthy Tarasconian, and handkerchiefs were waved from the windows, and men clapped their hands, and women threw kisses to the harmonious phalanx, which paraded the Esplanade, marching four rows deep, keeping step proudly, a banner at its head. An impetus had been given to the movement. From that day no more barcarolles, no more pensive sighing of guitars. Everywhere "The Spanish Lute" yielded to "The Marseillaise," and twice every week people were almost smothered upon the Esplanade, where they gathered to listen to the college band playing the *Chant du Départ.* Fabulous prices were paid for seats.

But the Tarasconese did not stop at that.

THE CAVALCADES.

AFTER the demonstration of the singing-societies, there were historical cavalcades for the benefit of the wounded. What more pleasing sight than that presented upon a bright Sabbath-day, when all the valorous youth of Tarascon might be seen, in hunting-boots and light tights, soliciting contributions from door to door, and caracoling under the balconies, armed with halberds and butterfly-nets! But finest of all was a patriotic tournament,

— Francis I. at the battle of Pavia. This was held thrice in succession on the Esplanade by the gentlemen of the Club. He who missed that sight has not lived! The Marseilles Theatre loaned the costumes. Gold and silk and velvet, embroidered standards, shields and helmets, caparisons, ribbons, bow-knots, rosettes, lance-heads, and breastplates, made the Esplanade flash and glitter like a mirror for enticing larks. And then a strong, sudden breath of the Mistral, which handled all this splendor somewhat roughly. It was indeed a magnificent sight. But, unfortunately, when, after a fierce contest, Francis I. — Monsieur Bompard, director of the Club — found that he was surrounded by a body of Reiters, the luckless Bompard, in surrendering his sword, did so with a shrug of the shoulders so enigmatic that, instead of announcing "All is lost save honor!" it seemed rather to say: "Digo-li que vengue, moun bon!"[1] But the Tarasconese were not too close observers, and patriotic tears sparkled in every eye.

THE BREACH.

WITH such spectacles as these, such songs, amid such glory of river and sky, no wonder all heads were turned. And their exaltation reached its highest point upon reading the Government Bulletins. People accosted each other upon the Esplanade with a threatening air, their teeth tightly closed, chewing their words like bullets. Their

[1] Provençal. "Tell him to come on, my brave!"

conversations smelt of powder. There was saltpetre in the air! And, above all, one should have heard these effervescent Tarasconians at a breakfast in the *Café de la Comédie.*

They would exclaim, "What are they doing, these Parisians, with that *tron de Dieu* General Trochu of theirs? They will never, never cut through the enemy! *Coquin de bon sort!* If now it was Tarascon! *Trrr!* Long ago we would have made a breach!" and while Paris was choking upon its oat-bread, these gentlemen devoured succulent red-legged partridges, washing them down with the good wine of Avignon, and when they had eaten till they could eat no more, their shining faces steeped in gravy up to the ears, they would shout like deaf men, striking the table vigorously, "A breach there! Make a breach, why don't you?" And really, they were quite right about it!

THE CLUB'S DEFENCE.

MEANWHILE the barbarian invasion was gradually gaining southward. Dijon taken, Lyon was threatened, and already the Uhlans' mares had caught a whiff of the fragrant fields of the Rhône Valley, and neighed longingly for them. "Let us organize our defence," said the Tarasconese, and every one set to work. In an instant the town was protected, barricaded, casemated. Every house became a fortress. At Costecalde's, the gunsmith, there was in front of the shop, a trench two metres

wide, with a drawbridge too, — really a charming affair! At the Club the defensive works were of such magnitude that every one visited them, moved by curiosity. Monsieur Bompard, the Club's director, stood at the head of the stairway, his chassepot in one hand, and furnished explanations to the ladies. "If they should approach on this side, piff! paff! If, on the other hand, they come from that direction, piff! paff!" And at every street-corner people would stop you with a mysterious air, and tell you, "The *Café de la Comédie* is impregnable!" or even more mysteriously, "They have just put torpedoes under the Esplanade!" Certainly the barbarians might do well to reflect!

THE SHARP-SHOOTERS.

At the same time companies of sharp-shooters were organized with an enthusiasm amounting to frenzy. *Brothers of Death, Narbonnese Jackals, Blunderbussers of the Rhône,* — they had all sorts of titles and colors, like the centaurea in a field of oats; and such panaches, and cock's-plumes, gigantic hats, and enormous belts! That he might have a more formidable air, every sharp-shooter allowed his moustache and beard to grow, so that one acquaintance could no longer recognize another if they met, out for a walk. At a distance you would sight a brigand of the Abruzzi, bearing down upon you with flaming eyes, bristling moustache, and a rattling of sabres, revolvers, and

yataghans; and when he came nearer it was only Pégoulade, the collector. Another time you would encounter on the stairway Robinson Crusoe himself, with his pointed hat, saw-toothed cutlass, and gun upon his shoulder, but, after all, it was only the gunsmith Costecalde, returning from town where he had been dining. But, the worst of it was that in giving themselves such a ferocious appearance, the Tarasconese actually became frightened of themselves, and soon no one dared walk abroad.

WILD RABBITS AND TAME RABBITS.

THE Bordeaux decree for the organization of the national guards put an end to this intolerable situation. At the powerful bidding of the triumvirs, *prrrt!* the cock's-plumes suddenly vanished, and Jackals, Blunderbussers, and others presented themselves to be made into honest militia-men, under orders of the gallant General Bravida, aged Captain of the Wardrobe. Now ensued new complications. The Bordeaux decree, as you know, recognized two classes in the national guards, the national guard that was to form part of the moving army, and the *sédentaires*,—"the wild rabbits, and the tame rabbits," as Pégoulade the collector observed drolly enough. At first, while the companies were forming, those of the guard who were wild rabbits naturally had the leading rôle to play. Every morning they drilled upon the Esplanade, gallant General Bravida at their

head; there was firing and skirmishing—"*Couchez-vous! levez-vous!*"—and divers orders. These sham-fights attracted crowds of spectators. The ladies of Tarascon would not miss a single one of them, and even the ladies from Beaucaire would sometimes cross the bridge, just to admire our rabbits. All this time, those poor tame rabbits of the national guard modestly did duty-service in the town, and were on guard before the museum, where there was nothing to guard but an old lizard stuffed with moss, and two falcons of the time of good King René; and besides, the Beaucaire ladies never crossed the bridge to see them! But after three months of skirmishing, when it was perceived that the wild rabbits of the national guard never once budged from the Esplanade, the popular enthusiasm began to cool.

All in vain did General Bravida cry to his rabbits, "*Couchez-vous! levez-vous!*" No one watched them now, and soon these mock-skirmishes were the laughing-stock of the town. Heaven knows, it was not the fault of these unfortunate rabbits that they received no marching orders. They were mad enough about it. At last one day they refused to drill.

"No more parade!" they cried with patriotic fervor; "we are the moving army, and we want to march!"

"And so you shall, or my name will not be Bravida!" exclaimed the gallant general, and swelling with anger he went to the *mairie*, and demanded an explanation. At the *mairie*, he was told no

orders had been received; it was for the prefecture to give them.

"To the prefecture, then, I will go," said Bravida; and a little later he was on the express, bound for Marseilles, in search of the prefect. Now this was no easy matter, for at Marseilles there are five or six prefects permanently located, and none who can tell you which one of them all is the special prefect with whom you have to do. However, by a stroke of good luck, Bravida put his hand upon the right one at the first moment, for all the prefects were assembled in council, when the gallant general addressed them in the name of his men, and with all the authority of a veteran Captain of the Wardrobe.

But after he had spoken a few words, the prefect interrupted him, —

"Pardon, general, but how is it that your soldiers ask you that they may be allowed to move, while they ask me for permission to stay at home! Read this."

And with a smile upon his lips, he tendered the general a most pathetic petition addressed to the prefecture, emanating from two of the wild rabbits, the very ones who had displayed the most furious zeal for marching; the petition contained a postscript from the doctor, from the priest, and from the notary of the town, and the petitioners requested that on account of physical infirmities they might be permitted to join the ranks of the tame rabbits.

"And I have more than three hundred just like

them," added the prefect, still smiling. "Now you understand, general, why we have not pressed your men to march. Unfortunately, too many already have been compelled to move, when they wanted to stay at home. No more of that! And so, God save the Republic! and — good luck to your rabbits!"

THE FAREWELL PUNCH.

It need not be said that the general returned to Tarascon crestfallen. But now for another story! What had the Tarasconese done during his absence? They had actually completed all the arrangements for a farewell punch, by subscription, for the rabbits who were about to leave! All to no purpose did the gallant General Bravida inform them that they need not take the trouble, that no one was going to leave. The punch was subscribed for, ordered; nothing remained now but to drink it, and they did. And so, one Sunday evening, that touching ceremony of drinking the farewell punch took place in the rooms of the *mairie*, and through the small hours toasts, vivats, addresses, and patriotic songs made the windows of the municipal building tremble. Every one knew, of course, how much significance this farewell punch had. The tame rabbits of the guard, who had paid for it, were strongly convinced that their comrades had no intention of leaving. The wild rabbits, who drank the punch, were of the same conviction, and the

venerable deputy-mayor, who, in a voice trembling with emotion, protested in the hearing of all these braves that he was ready to march at their head, knew better than any other there that they were not to march at all. But what difference did that make? These *méridionaux* are such extraordinary creatures that before the farewell punch was finished everybody was in tears, every one embracing his neighbor, and, strangest of all, everybody was sincere about it, even the general.

At Tarascon, as indeed throughout all the South of France, I have frequently observed this result of mirage.

BÉLISAIRE'S PRUSSIAN.

HERE is an incident I heard related in a pot-house at Montmartre. To repeat it to you as it was told, I ought to have the local vocabulary of Master Bélisaire, his big carpenter's apron, and two or three draughts of that fine white wine of Montmartre, which can give a Parisian accent even to a Frenchman from Marseilles! Then I should be sure the same shiver would pass through your veins as thrilled mine in hearing Bélisaire narrate to a tableful of companions this lugubrious and veritable story.

"It was the day after the amnesty" ("the *armistice*," Bélisaire would say). "My wife had sent us both, the boy and me, to take a walk around Villeneuve-la-Garenne, for we had a little shanty there, at the river's edge, and we had been without news of it ever since the siege began. I was bothered at having to take the boy along, for I knew we should run into the Prussians, and as I had never met any of them before, I felt sure that something would happen. But the mother stuck to her idea, and said 'Go, go! then the child will get an airing.'

"And indeed the poor thing needed one badly enough, after five months of siege and mildew!

And so we both started out for the country. Maybe the brat was n't pleased to find out that there were still trees and birds; maybe he did n't paddle through the plough-lands! But I did n't enjoy myself quite so much. There were too many helmets along the road. From the canal to the Island I saw nothing else. Insolent dogs! one had to hold on to himself with all his might to keep from hammering one or two! But, you may believe, I nearly boiled over when I entered Villeneuve, and saw our poor gardens completely ruined, our houses open, turned inside out, and those bandits making themselves at home in our quarters, calling from window to window, hanging their woollen shirts upon our shutters and trellises. Luckily the child was at my side, and when my hand itched too much I thought as I looked at him: 'Keep cool, Bélisaire. Look out that no harm happens to the youngster!' Only that saved me from making a fool of myself. I understood then why the mother wanted me to take him along.

"Our shanty stood at the end of the road, last one on the right hand, on the quay. I found it had been emptied from top to bottom, just like the others. Not a bit of furniture, not so much as a pane of glass left. Only a few bundles of straw; the last leg of the big arm-chair was crackling in the chimney-place. I scented Prussians everywhere, but could n't see one. Then it did seem to me that I heard something stirring down in the basement. I had a little bench there, where I amused myself of a Sunday at odd jobs. I told

the boy to wait for me where he was, and I went downstairs to look for myself.

"No sooner had I opened the door than one of William's soldiers, a big brute of a fellow, sprang with a snort from beneath a pile of shavings, and rushed towards me, his eyes starting from his head, and with all manner of oaths I understood not a word of! He must have felt out of sorts when he awoke, for at the first word I attempted to say, he started to draw his sword.

"I was struck of a heap. All the spleen which had been gathering for the last hour was uppermost. I gripped the big iron clamp of the bench, and I struck. You know, comrades, that Bélisaire's fist is no light one on ordinary occasions, but that day it seemed as if I had the Almighty's thunderbolts at the end of my arm. The very first blow knocked my Prussian silly. There he lay, sprawling at full length. I thought he was only stunned. Well, yes! stunned he was, done for, my boys. The neatest, cleanest bit of work! — as if he'd been washed in potash. What do you say to that, eh?

"And I, who had never killed anything in my life before, not so much as a lark! It seemed queer enough to see that big carcass stretched in front of me. My word for it, he was a fair, handsome fellow, with a funny little beard, that curled just like ash shavings. My legs shook under me as I looked at him. By this time, the boy had grown tired upstairs, and I heard him crying at the full strength of his lungs, 'Papa, papa!'

"The Prussians were passing along the road; I could catch a glimpse of their sabres and their big legs through the air-hole of the basement. Suddenly it occurred to me: 'If they get in, the child is lost! They'll kill every one they find. That was the end of it. I trembled no longer. I shoved my Prussian hastily under the bench, covering him with everything I could find, boards and sawdust and shavings; then I went upstairs to find the boy.

"'Come along.'

"'What's the matter, papa? How pale you look!'

"'Come, come!'

"And I can tell you, if those Cossacks had turned me upside down, searched me through and through, I'd have offered no objection. It seemed to me every moment that I heard some one running, crying, at our backs; once I heard a horse, close upon us, going at a gallop. It startled me so I thought I should drop. But after the bridge was passed, I dared to look about me, and knew where I was again. Saint-Dénis was full of people. There was no danger of our being fished out of that crowd. Then for the first time I thought of our poor shanty. Very likely the Prussians would set fire to it when they discovered their comrade; and besides, my neighbor Jacquot, the river-keeper, was the only Frenchman in that neighborhood now, and it would surely make trouble for him when it was found that a soldier had been killed almost at his door. It was a shabby trick I had served him, running off in that fashion.

"I might at least have put my man where he would n't be found. As I came nearer Paris, that thought pestered me more and more. I don't deny it made me uneasy to think I had left that Prussian there in my cellar. When I reached the rampart, I could n't stand it any longer.

"'Go ahead,' I said to the youngster. 'I have a customer I must see at Saint-Denis.'

"Then I kissed him, and turned back. My heart beat a little faster than usual, but what did that matter? I was relieved to think the boy was not with me.

"As I approached Villeneuve, night was coming on. I kept my eye open, you may be sure, and my head looked out for my heels. The country was quiet enough. I could see the shanty, just where it always was, there in the fog. Along the quay stretched a long, black line. It was the Prussians, mustering. I had a good chance of finding the house empty.

"As I slipped along the enclosures, I saw Father Jacquot in his yard, spreading his nets. Surely nothing had been discovered so far. I entered our place, and went down cellar, feeling my way along. I found my Prussian was still under his shavings. Two big rats were tugging away at his helmet, and it gave me quite a start to hear that chin-piece moving. For a moment I thought that the dead man had come to life again, but no! his head was heavy and cold. I hid in a corner, and waited. My idea was to throw the body into the Seine, after the others had fallen asleep.

"I don't know whether it was because that corpse was so close to me, but the tattoo of the Prussians sounded infernally doleful to me that evening. Three great trumpet blasts at once, and '*Ta, ta, ta*—' a regular frog-concert! Our soldiers of the line would never want to turn in to such music as that!

"For five minutes I heard the noise of sabres, rapping upon the doors. Then some soldiers entered the yard, and began to call,—

"'Hoffman, Hoffman!'

"Poor Hoffman lay there under his shavings, quiet enough. It was I who was ready to drop! Every moment I expected to hear them enter that cellar. I had dug out the dead man's sword, and there I waited, never daring to budge, saying all to myself; 'If you get out of this alive, my boy, you owe a splendid candle to St. John the Baptist at Belleville!'

"All the same, after they had called Hoffman often enough, my tenants decided to enter. I heard their heavy boots tramping over the stairs, and in a few minutes the entire barrack of them was snoring soundly, making as much noise as a country clock. That was what I had been waiting for! I started out. The bank was deserted, the lights in the houses were out. So much the better. I went down into the basement again. I dug out my Hoffman from under that bench, stood him up, and hoisted him over my shoulders as a porter might his pack. Oh! but he was heavy, the rascal! And what with fear, and nothing in my crop since

morning I never thought I 'd have strength enough for what I had to do. And then, just on the middle of the quay, I thought I felt some one behind me. I turned around. Not a soul! But the moon was rising. I said to myself, 'Look out! the sentry may fire upon you any moment.'

"To make matters worse, the Seine was low. If I threw him in near the bank, he 'd stay there, as if he 'd been dropped into a basin. I went in myself. On and on! But nowhere water enough. My strength was gone. My limbs were cramped. At last, when I thought I was deep enough in, I let my man drop. But what do you think? He stuck in the mud. Could n't move him. I shoved and shoved. Get up, get up there! But luckily an east wind sprang up. The Seine swelled, and I felt that the dead man slipped lightly from his mooring. A pleasant voyage! I swallowed a mouthful of water and clambered on to the bank again.

"As I crossed the Villeneuve bridge I saw a black object in the middle of the Seine. From a distance it looked like a wherry. It was my Prussian, floating towards Argenteuil, following the current of the river."

COUNTRY-FOLK IN PARIS DURING THE SIEGE.

AT Champrosay, these people were happy indeed. Their farmyard was just under my windows, and for six months of the year my life brought me somewhat in contact with theirs. Before daybreak, the goodman of the house would proceed to the stable, harness his wagon, and set out for Corbeil, where he sold his vegetables; a little later the wife rose, dressed the children, fed the poultry, and milked the cow; all morning long there was such a clatter of sabots over the wooden staircase! In the afternoon all was silent. The father was in the fields, the children were at school, and the mother busied herself silently, spreading out linen in the yard, or sat and sewed before her door, watching her youngest. From time to time some passer-by would stop on the road, and then she would have a chat, plying her needle all the while.

But one day — it was towards the end of the month of August, ever that memorable month! — I heard the goodwife saying to one of her neighbors, —

"What! you don't mean it? The Prussians? but they've merely reached France! — nothing more!"

"They are at Chalons, Mother Jean!" I exclaimed from my window. And that made her smile not a little. In that small, out-of-the-way corner of Seine-et-Oise the country-people could not believe in an invasion at all.

And yet every day wagons were seen passing, loaded with luggage. People had closed their houses, and through that beautiful month, when the days are so long, gardens blossomed in dreary solitude, and no one so much as opened a gate to look at them. By degrees my neighbors themselves grew alarmed. Each fresh departure from the neighborhood made them sad. They felt they were forsaken.

One morning a flourish of drums was heard through the village. An order had come from the *mairie*. They must go to Paris, sell their cow, their fodder, leave nothing behind for the Prussians. And so the goodman set out for Paris, and it was a mournful journey indeed. Along the paved highway, one heavy van of furniture followed another, a long procession, and helter-skelter ran troops of swine and sheep, dazed and confused, getting between the wheels, while oxen, tied together, bellowed after the wagons. On the side of the road, along the ditch, poor wretches were hurrying on foot, behind handcarts full of antiquated furniture, faded easy-chairs, Empire-tables, and mirrors draped in chintz; it was impossible not to feel what distress had entered these homes, at having to remove all these dusty things, all these relics, and to drag load upon load of them along the highways.

At the gates of Paris it was suffocating. There was a wait of two hours. All this time the poor farmer, pushed against his cow, gazed in terror at the embrasures, where cannon were mounted, at ditches filled with water, the fortifications which rose before him, and tall Italian poplars, cut down and withering along the roadside. That evening he returned, utterly dismayed, and told his wife all he had seen. The wife was terrified, and wanted to leave the very next day. But something always occurred to delay their departure from one day to another. There was a new harvesting, or a piece of land that must be ploughed, — and would they not have time to gather the vintage? And deep down in their hearts was a vague hope that perhaps the Prussians would not visit their part of the world.

One night they were awakened by an awful report! The Corbeil bridge had been blown up. Men were running about the country, knocking from door to door, with the cry, —

"The Uhlans! the Uhlans! Flee for your lives!"

They rose as quickly as they could, harnessed the wagon, dressed the children, still half-asleep, and fled along the crossroads with some of their neighbors. Just as they climbed the hill, the clock rang three. They looked back one last time. There was the watering-place, the church-square, there were the roads they knew so well, one descending towards the Seine, the other winding among the vineyards. Already everything began

to look strange to them, and in the gray mist of the early morning the little deserted village itself, each house closed against its neighbor, seemed to shiver as if it too were filled with some terrible foreboding.

And now they are in Paris. Two rooms in the fourth story, in a dismal street. The man himself might be worse off; work has been found for him, and besides, he is in the national guard. He has the life on the ramparts, the daily drill, and diverts himself as best he can, that he may forget his empty granary, and his unsown fields. But the woman, less amenable to the influences of civilization, is wretched, weary of it all, does not know what to do with herself. She has sent the two oldest children to school; but in that dreary day-school, not brightened by a single flower-plot, the little girls cannot breathe freely, and they remember their own pretty convent-school in the country, as busy and full of life and happiness as a beehive. They remember the half-mile walk they took through the woods every morning to reach that school. It pains the mother to see them so unhappy, but she worries most of all about the youngest child.

At home, he went back and forth, following her everywhere, through the yard, through the house, passing across the threshold as many times as herself, dabbling his tiny, reddened hands in the wash-tub, seating himself at the door when she would rest herself for a little while with her knitting. But here, they must climb four stories, over a dark stair-

way where the feet slip; there is only a miserable fire in the narrow chimney-place, and through the high windows is seen only a gray, smoky horizon, and roof-tops of wet slate.

There is, however, a yard where he might play, but this the concierge will not permit. These concierges are another invention of city life. At home, in the village, every man is his own master, and every one has at least a little corner he may call his own. And all day long the door is ajar; at nightfall a big wooden latch is enough for safety, and soon the entire household is wrapped in the darkness of night in the country, a night which knows no fear, and is filled with refreshing slumber. Now and then a dog may bark at the moon, but no one loses his rest on that account. Here in Paris, in these houses of the poor, the concierge is the real proprietor. Her boy dares not go downstairs alone, he is so afraid of this ill-natured woman, who has even compelled them to sell their goat, pretending that it dragged straw and peelings over the stones of the yard.

The poor mother has no stories left with which to divert the child when he is tired. After their meal is over, she wraps him as if they were going for a walk in the fields. Together, hand in hand, they pass through the streets, along the boulevards. Startled, jostled against, bewildered, the child scarcely casts a glance around him. He sees nothing that interests him except horses. They are the only objects that look familiar to him, and he smiles when he sees one. Neither does the

mother take the least pleasure now in anything she sees. She walks on with slow steps, dreaming of her house, her little homestead. And as they pass by,—the mother with her open, honest expression, her neat attire, her smooth and shining hair, the child with his chubby figure, his big galoshes,—one who looks at them closely must feel that they are two aliens, exiles, who long, with all their hearts, for the fresh air and the solitude of their country lanes.

AT THE OUTPOSTS.

MEMORIES OF THE SIEGE.

THE following notes were written from day to day, while passing from one outpost to another. In offering them, I am merely detaching a leaf from my note-book, before the Siege of Paris has become a thing of the past. It is only a sketch, desultory and abrupt, dashed off upon my knee from time to time, and with no more smoothness than the splinter of a shell. But I give these notes just as they are, without altering one word, without even rereading them for myself, lest in so doing I might attempt to lend interest to them by adding fiction to fact, and so mar the whole.

AT LA CORNEUVE, A MORNING IN DECEMBER.

A WHITE, wintry plain, rugged and chalky, across which every sound echoes. Along the frozen mud of the road the infantry of the line are advancing, pell-mell, with the artillery. A slow and dreary march. There will be fighting soon. The men stumble again and again, walk with lowered heads, shivering with the cold, their guns strapped, their

hands concealed within their blankets, as in a muff. From time to time is heard the cry of "Halt!"

The frightened horses neigh. The ammunition wagons rumble, and artillery-men, raising themselves in the saddle, anxiously scan the great white wall of Bourget.

"Can you see them?" ask the soldiers, striking their feet together to warm them. And then "Forward march!" and that human wave, driven back for a moment, moves onward in silence, never quickening its pace.

On the horizon, in front of the fort of Aubervilliers, and sharply outlined against the cold sky in which the sun is rising like a leaden disc, a little group is seen. It is the governor and his staff; against the gray sky they stand in strong relief, like Japanese figures upon a background of mother-of-pearl. In nearer view, stationed along the road like a flock of crows, black-robed figures are seen, ministering brothers of charity, ready for duty at the ambulances. Standing there, their hands crossed beneath their capes as they watch the long line moving on to become food for the cannon, devotion, humility, and sorrow speak from their eyes.

Same day. — Villages deserted, abandoned houses wide open, roofs demolished, windows with their weatherboards gone, staring at you like the eyes of a corpse.

Now and then, in one of these ruins where every sound reverberates, something is heard stirring, the sound of footsteps perhaps, or a door rattling on

its hinges; and after you have passed, a soldier of the line appears on the threshold, hollow-eyed, suspicious, — some marauder perhaps, who is making a search, or some deserter seeking a hiding place. Upon entering one of these country-houses, towards noon, it appears to be empty and bare. A vulture's claws could not scrape it cleaner! On the lower floor the big kitchen, windowless, doorless, opens upon the back yard, and at the end of the yard is a green hedge; behind the hedge the open country is seen. At one end there is a little spiral stairway of stone. I seat myself upon one of its steps, and remain there for some time. How good a gift this sunshine, this deep calm everywhere! Two or three big flies of last summer, revived by the sunlight, buzz about the rafters of the ceiling. At the fireplace, a few traces of a fire remain, and the hearthstone is reddened with congealed blood. This blood-stained hearth, those cinders still warm, tell the mournful story of the preceding night.

ALONG THE MARNE.

December 3. — Went out through the Porte de Montreuil. A heavy sky, piercing wind, — fog everywhere.

No one to be seen in Montreuil. Doors and windows closed. Behind their enclosure, a flock of geese were cackling. Plainly, the master himself is still here, but in hiding. A little further on,

a cabaret, open. It is warm within, and there is a roaring fire. Three provincials, mobiles, it appears, are seated as close to it as possible, breakfasting. They speak not a word; their eyes are swollen, their faces inflamed; they rest their elbows upon the table, and the poor *moblots* almost fall asleep as they eat.

Left Montreuil, and crossed the Bois de Vincennes, blue with the dense smoke of bivouac fires. Ducrot's army is there. The men are cutting trees to warm themselves. It is a shame to see poplars and birches and young ash-trees flying into the air, root and all, and trailing their delicate golden foliage along the road.

At Nogent, more soldiers, — artillery-men in great cloaks, Norman mobiles, with plump bodies, rounded as apples, little Zouaves, well-muffled, but agile enough, soldiers of the line, bent almost double, their blue handkerchiefs tied about their ears, beneath their képis. Loungers swarm the streets, people jostle each other at the doorways of the two grocery-shops still open. One is reminded of some tiny Algerian village.

At last the open country. A long, deserted road descending towards the Marne. A beautiful sky, pearly in tint, trees whose bare boughs shiver in the mist; below, the great viaduct of the railway, presenting a sinister appearance, like a huge jaw in which a tooth is gone here and there, for the arches of the viaduct have been destroyed in places.

Passing through Le Perreux, ruined gardens

everywhere, houses devastated and dreary; in one of those tiny villas bordering the roadside, I saw behind the gate three great white chrysanthemums, full-blown, which had escaped the general massacre. I pushed open the gate and entered, but they were so beautiful that I could not bear to pluck them.

Took a cross-road, and descended towards the Marne. When I reached the riverside, the sun came out, and shone in full glory upon the river. It was a lovely sight. Just across the river was Petit-Bry, where there had been so much fighting the day before; on the hillside, surrounded by vineyards, its little white houses nestle peacefully, row upon row. Near me, on the river, a boat among the reeds. A group of men are talking upon the bank, while they watch the opposite slope. They are scouts who are going to Petit-Bry to discover whether the Saxons have returned. I cross with them. As we are rowed over the stream, one of the scouts, sitting behind me, says to me in a low voice, —

"If you wish chassepots — the *mairie* is full of them. They have left a colonel of the line there too, a big, fair-haired fellow, with a skin as white as a woman's; and he had on yellow boots that were quite new!"

The boots of the dead soldier had evidently impressed him more than anything else. He was constantly referring to them.

"*Vingt dieux!* but that was a fine pair of boots!" and his eyes sparkled as he spoke.

As we entered Petit-Bry, a sailor shod with

Spanish sandals and carrying four or five chasse-pots, came rolling out of an alley and approached us on the run.

"Keep your eyes open! there are the Prussians!" he said.

We crouched behind a little wall and watched. Above us, and higher than the vineyards themselves, a horseman was seen, quite a melodramatic figure, outlined against the horizon. He was leaning forward in the saddle, his helmet upon his head, his carbine in his hand. Then other horsemen appeared, and foot-soldiers crouched in various places among the vines.

One of them, quite near us, had taken position behind a tree, and never once moved. He was a huge fellow, in a long brown coat, and a colored handkerchief was tied about his head. From the spot where we stood he would have made a splendid target, but what good would that have done? The scouts knew what they were about. And so we hastily entered the boat. The boatman began to swear. We recrossed the Marne without mishap. But scarcely had we landed when we heard muffled voices calling from the opposite bank, —

"Holloa, holloa there! the boat!"

It was my acquaintance who had taken such a fancy to the boots a while before; with three or four of his companions, he had attempted to reach the *mairie*, and was obliged to return precipitately. Unfortunately, there was no one to return for him and his companions. Our boatman had disappeared.

"I do not know how to row," says to me, piteously enough, the sergeant of the scouts, who is crouching at my side in a hole at the water's edge. All this time the others are growing impatient.

"Come, come!" they call; some one must get them. Not an agreeable task. The Marne is rough and swollen. I pull across with all my might, and every moment I feel, back of me, that Saxon above, watching me, motionless, from behind his tree.

In boarding the boat, one of the scouts jumps in so hastily that it is filled with water. It becomes impossible to take on all the men without running the risk of sinking the boat. The bravest one remains to wait upon the bank. He is a corporal of the franc-tireurs, a handsome boy in blue, a little bird worked upon the front of his cap. I would have returned for him gladly, but just then a fusillade from one bank to another began. He waited a few moments without a word; then he took himself off towards Champigny, keeping close to the walls. I do not know what became of him.

Same day. — It is the same with things as with persons; a union of the grotesque with the dramatic adds peculiar intensity to the thrill of horror we experience. To see great suffering stamped upon a face whose outline at other times would cause a smile, does not this move you more profoundly than it would to read the same story elsewhere? Picture to yourself a bourgeois of Daumier's in the last agonies of death, or weeping his heart out beside the dead body of a son

brought home to him slain. Is there not peculiar poignancy in that anguish? Ah, well! to look at all those bourgeois villas along the Marne, toy-gingerbread cottages, gaudy caricatures in rose-pink, apple-green, canary-yellow, and mediæval turrets roofed with zinc, kiosks of imitation brick, rococo gardens, in the centre of each a white metal ball, — when I see them now, blackened with the smoke of battle, their roofs splintered with shells, their weather-vanes broken, their walls dented, blood and straw everywhere, there is something horrible in the sight.

The house which I entered was a fair type of them all. I ascended to the first story and entered the little parlor, done in red and gold. The paper-hangers had not finished their work upon it. Rolls of paper and gilded mouldings were lying about, but there was not a trace of furniture. Bits of broken bottles were scattered over the floor, and in a corner, upon a straw mattress, a man was sleeping in his blouse. Moreover, an indescribable odor of wine, powder, candles, and musty straw; which of these the strongest, it would be hard to say. To warm myself, I toss the leg of a centre-table into the fireplace. Such an idiotic fireplace, stuccoed in pink, and resembling some marvel of the confectioner's art!

While I look at it, for a moment it seems to me that I am merely spending a Sunday afternoon in the country in some prosperous little bourgeois establishment. Is not some one playing backgammon behind me there, in the parlor?

No! those are riflemen, loading and discharging their chassepots. Except for the frequent reports, one might mistake the sound for the tossing of dice.

Upon each report, there is a reply from the opposite bank. The sound borne across the water ricochets back and forth, and echoes ceaselessly among the hills.

Through the loopholes in the parlor, the gleam of the Marne may be seen, its bank bathed in sunlight, and between the poles of the vineyards, like great greyhounds, move the Prussians.

SOUVENIR OF FORT MONTROUGE.

HIGH above, upon the bastion of the fort, in the embrasure formed by sandbags, long marine guns raise themselves proudly, almost erect in their carriages, pointing towards Châtillon. Thus aimed, with their mouths in the air, their handles protruding like ears on each side, they make one think of immense hunting-dogs baying at the moon, bellowing in the face of death. A little lower, upon a terreplein, the sailors are amusing themselves, as if aboard ship, by making an English garden in miniature. There is a bench, an arbor, lawns, and rockeries, and even a banana-tree, not a very tall one, to be sure, scarcely higher than a hyacinth; but all the same it is a welcome sight, and its small green tuft, seen in the midst of sandbags and piles of shells, refreshes the eye.

Oh! that little garden at Fort Montrouge! Would I might see it again, surrounded by a paling, and in that garden a memorial stone, on which were inscribed the names of Carvès, Desprez, Saisset, and all those brave sailors who fell at their post of honor on yonder bastion.

AT LA FOUILLEUSE.

THE morning of the twentieth of January. A pleasant morning, mild and cloudy. Great stretches of plough-land, undulating at a distance, like the sea. On the left, high sand-hills, which serve as a buttress for Mont Valérien. On the right, Gibet Mill, a little stone mill, its sails broken and a battery upon its platform.

Walked for a quarter of an hour beside the long trench leading to the mill. Over it rested a light veil, like a river mist. It was smoke from the bivouac fires. Soldiers were squatting about, making coffee. The smoke of the green wood they were inhaling blinded and choked them. From one end to the other of the trench, a prolonged cough was heard. La Fouilleuse, — a farm, bordered by small timber. Arrived there just in time to see the last of our lines beating a retreat. It was the Third Regiment of Paris mobiles. It marched in good order, none missing, a commander at its head. After the incomprehensible confusion and disorder I had seen since yesterday evening, this sight reassured me a little. After the men, came two horse-

men, — a general and his aide-de-camp. They were quite near me as they passed. The horses were trotting leisurely, the two men were talking to each other, and loudly enough to be heard. The aide-de-camp said, in a fresh young voice, a trifle obsequious, —

"Yes, general! — oh, no! general — certainly, my general."

And the general, in mild, but heart-broken tones, —

"What! he is slain? Oh! the poor boy, the poor boy!"

Then the voices were silent, and nothing was heard but the tramping of horses in the soft earth.

For a moment I remained there alone, looking at that vast, melancholy landscape. One was reminded somewhat of the plains of Chélif or of Mitidja. Lines of ambulance men in gray blouses were climbing a hollowed road. Seeing their white banner, with its red cross, one might have believed he was in Palestine, at the time of the Crusades.

GLIMPSES OF THE INSURRECTION.

IN THE MARAIS.

In the dampness and provincial gloom of these long, tortuous streets, through which are wafted odors of drugs and logwood, in the midst of these ancient hôtels of the time of Henry II., of Louis XIII., which modern industry has caricatured by converting them into establishments for the manufacture of seltzer-water, bronzes, and chemical products, these mouldy gardens filled with packing-cases, these courts of honor, over which heavy trucks are rumbling, these swelling balconies, tall windows, worm-eaten gables, as blackened with smoke as church extinguishers, — in this quarter, the insurrection, especially during those first days, has a unique physiognomy, all its own, an air of primitive simplicity. Rough attempts at barricading every street-corner, but not a soul to guard the barricade. No cannons, no mitrailleuses. Heaps of stones piled up without method or intelligence, simply for the delight of obstructing a passage, leaving big puddles of water for swarms of gamins to paddle in, sailing flotillas of paper boats. Every shop is open, and the shop-keepers are standing at their doors, laughing and discussing politics, from one sidewalk to another. It is not

such people as these who are raising riots, but it is plainly to be seen that they regard the work of the insurgents well-pleased, as though, in disturbing the stones of this peaceful neighborhood, the revolt had aroused the very soul of the ancient bourgeois of Paris in all its riotous levity.

What might have been called, in other days, the spirit of the Fronde, animates the Marais at this hour. Upon the frontons of these proud houses, grotesque faces of sculptured stone, grimace joyously, as if to say, "We have seen all this before!" And my fancy runs away with me and in spite of myself clothes in flowered coats, knee-breeches and big cocked hats this little world of bustling druggists, gilders, and grocers, who with the air of mere spectators watch the tearing up of their streets, their sides shaking with laughter, and are proud to think they have a barricade close to their very shops.

Now and then, at the end of a long, dark alley, I I can see bayonets gleaming upon the Place de Grève. I catch a glimpse of the ancient town-hall, gilded by the sun. In this blaze of light, horsemen are seen galloping by, in long gray cloaks, with floating plumes.

A crowd follows them, shouting and waving their hats. Is it Mademoiselle Montpensier or General Cremer? Epochs begin to grow confused in my brain. In the sunlight, at a distance, a red-shirted Garibaldian orderly rushes by at full speed, and I can almost fancy that I see the red cloak of the

Cardinal de Retz. I can scarcely tell whether that shrewdest of shrewd schemers, of whom all these groups of people are talking, is M. Thiers or Mazarin. I seem to be in a past three hundred years removed from to-day.

AT MONTMARTRE.

As I was climbing the Rue Lepic the other morning, I saw in a cobbler's shop an officer of the national guard, with sabre at his side, and lace up to the elbow. He was tapping a pair of boots, protected by his leather apron that he need not soil his coat. One glance at that shop-window was enough to suggest the whole of insurgent Montmartre.

Imagine an immense village, armed to the teeth, mitrailleuses in front of the watering-trough, the church-square bristling with bayonets, a barricade in front of the schoolhouse, milk-cans and canister side by side; every house is converted into a barrack, at every window soldiers' gaiters are hanging to dry, képis lean forward, waiting to hear the call; in the little shops where old clothes are sold, a vigorous pounding of gun-butts is heard, and from the foot of the hill to the top, a clatter of platters and sabres and canteens. Yet, in spite of all these things, Montmartre does not look as fierce as when it marched upon the Boulevard des Italiens, rifles shouldered, and chin-straps under the chins, marking time ferociously, and seeming to say, "Our

best behavior now! the Reaction is watching us." Here the insurgents are at home, and in spite of cannon and barricades, there is little of a formal or formidable nature in this revolt. It seemed rather a family affair.

A painful sight it was, however, to see the swarms of red trousers, deserters of all sorts — Zouaves, *lignards*, mobiles — obstructing the square in front of the *mairie*, lying about on the benches, sprawling along the sidewalks, drunken, filthy, tattered, and unshaven for a week. As I was passing, one of these luckless rascals, who had climbed up into a tree, began to harangue the crowd. His tongue did not move very freely, and laughter and hootings greeted his efforts. In another part of the Place, a battalion was in motion, on its way up to the ramparts.

"Forward!" cried the officers, waving their swords. The drums beat the charge, and the worthy militiamen, with ardent zeal, rushed to the assault of a long, deserted street, at the end of which could be seen a few terrified, cackling hens, — nothing more!

At the top of the hill a vista of green gardens and yellow roads; rising in their midst La Galette mill, transformed into a military post, with rows of tents, the smoke of tiny bivouac-fires, and, outlined against this background, figures of the national guard are seen. Every object as sharply defined as if sighted from the end of a spyglass, between the sky, black and full of rain, and the shining ochre of the hill.

AT THE FAUBOURG SAINT-ANTOINE.

A NIGHT in January, during the Siege of Paris, I stood upon the Place de Nanterre, in the midst of a battalion of *Franc-tireurs*. The enemy had just attacked our outposts, and men hastily arming to go to the relief of their comrades were forming, groping their way as best they could through the wind and snow; we saw a patrol emerge from a street-corner, preceded by a lantern.

"Halt! who goes there?"

"Mobiles of '48," replied the tremulous voice of an old man. They were tiny fellows in short cloaks, képis askew, and something almost infantile in their appearance. At a little distance they might have been mistaken for children of the regiment, but when the sergeant went closer to see who they were, the light of our lanterns revealed a tiny old man, wrinkled, faded, with blinking eyes and a snow-white chin-beard. This child of the regiment was at least a hundred years old. His companions were scarcely younger. And then that Parisian accent and swashbuckler air of these venerable old gamins!

Arrived the day before at the outposts, the unhappy mobiles had lost their way on their first patrol. They were quickly despatched upon their business.

"Make haste, comrades! the Prussians are attacking us."

"Ah! ah! the Prussians are attacking us!" repeated the poor old creatures, quite dismayed; and turning upon their heels, they were soon lost in the night, their lantern dancing and flickering under the fusillade.

I cannot tell you the fantastic impression these tiny gnomes produced upon me. They looked so aged, so bewildered, so weary! They seemed to have come from some great distance, — and I could almost imagine this was a phantom-patrol, wandering through the land since 1848, a patrol that had lost its way twenty-three years ago, and in search of it ever since.

The insurgents of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine recalled this apparition to me. I found these ancients of '48 forever going astray — a little older now than they were then, but as incorrigible as ever, hoary-haired rioters playing at their old game of civil war with a classic barricade two or three stories high, a red flag floating from its summit, melodramatic attitudes at the cannon's breech, sleeves rolled up, gruff voices exclaiming, —

"Keep on the move, citizens!" and then their bayonets were pointed.

All is bustle and commotion upon this great Babel-like faubourg. From the Place du Trône to the Bastille, surprises, scuffles, searches, and arrests, open-air meetings, pilgrimages to the Column;[1] tipsy patrollers have forgotten the password; chassepots go off of themselves; ribalds are led to the *comité* of the Rue Basfroid; the

[1] La Colonne de Juillet, on the Place de la Bastille. — Tr.

drum beats to arms; the general and the tocsin are heard. Oh! that tocsin. With what delight these madmen set their bells a-ringing. As soon as twilight sets in, in every belfry a mad dance begins, incessant as the tinkling of a jester's bells! Hark! the drunken tocsin, fantastic, uncertain, panting in broken tones, stammering and hiccoughing. And the earnest tocsin! ringing out fiercely with all its might, peal upon peal, till the bell-rope breaks! And then the muffled tocsin, lifeless and dead, its sleepy notes falling as heavily upon the ear as the curfew's toll.

In the midst of all this tumult of distracted bells and brains, I am impressed by the tranquillity of the Rue Lappe and the alleys and passages which radiate from it. The neighborhood is a species of Auvergnese ghetto where the children of Cantal traffic peacefully their old iron, as little concerned with thoughts of an insurrection as though it were located a thousand leagues away. As I pass, I note that all these brave Rémonencques are very busy in their dark shops. The women squat upon the stone step in front of their doorways, and knit and jabber in broken French, while their little ones tumble about in the passage, their frizzly locks full of iron-dust.

THE FERRY.

BEFORE the war, a fine suspension-bridge crossed the river at this point, with two lofty piers of white stone, and its tarred cordage, spanning the horizon from one river-bank to the other, presented that aërial appearance which adds such beauty to vessels or balloons. Beneath the great middle arches of the bridge, a line of boats passed twice a day, in clouds of smoke, without having to lower a smoke-stack. On either bank, washerwomen's boats and beaters were seen, and small fishing-boats anchored to rings.

A road shaded with poplars led to the bridge, stretching from meadow to meadow, like a great green curtain, fluttering with every breeze that blew from the river. It was a charming sight.

But this year all is changed. The poplars are still standing, but they no longer lead to the bridge, for the bridge is gone. The two piers have been blown up, scattering fragments of stone in all directions. The stones are lying there still. The little white toll-house, half destroyed by the explosion, wears the appearance of a new ruin, a barricade, or some pile of rubbish. Cordage and iron wires are drenched with water. The platform of the bridge, sunk in the sand, water all about it,

looks like a huge wreck, surmounted by a red flag to warn mariners; all that the Seine has to offer, cut grass and mouldy planks, is caught here, as if by a dam, eddying and whirling. There is a rent in the landscape, an open wound that tells of disaster. And to make the sight still sadder, the poplars along the walk leading to the bridge have been shorn of their leafage. All those beautiful tufted poplars are literally devoured by larvæ, for trees themselves are subject to invasion. There is not a single shoot to be seen on the branches, the trees are cut, their foliage thinned. And through the great avenue, useless and deserted now, big white butterflies float lazily.

While waiting for the bridge to be rebuilt, a ferry has been established near-by. It is an immense raft, and upon it are ferried across horses and carriages, plough-horses and ploughs, and cows rolling their placid eyes at sight of the moving waters. Beasts and equipages are placed in the middle of the raft; on the sides, passengers of various sorts, country people, children going to school in the village, Parisians off for a holiday. Ribbons and veils flutter beside horses' tethers. The little company upon the raft might have been dropped from some wreck. The boat advances slowly.

The passage across the Seine seems longer than ever now, the river wider than before, and with the ruins of that broken bridge in the foreground, the horizon bounding those banks, each almost a stranger to the other, expands with a sad solemnity.

That morning I reached the ferry very early. As yet there was no one on the bank. The ferryman's little house, an old van, standing in the moist sand, was closed. It was dripping from the fog. Children were coughing inside.

"Hallo! — Eugène!"

"Coming, coming!" called the ferryman; and he came, dragging himself along. He was an excellent ferryman, still young, but he had served in the artillery during the last war, and he came out of it crippled with rheumatism, the splinter of a shell in his leg, his face all scarred. The brave fellow smiled when he saw me.

"We shall have plenty of room this morning, sir!"

And indeed I was the only one on the ferry, but before he had unfastened his rope more passengers arrived. First came a stout, bright-eyed farmer's wife, going to market at Corbeil, with a big basket upon each arm, which straightened her rustic figure, and helped her to walk firmly and erectly. Behind her, in the hollow road, came others whose figures were seen indistinctly through the mist, though their voices could be heard. One of these voices was a woman's, gentle and tearful.

"Oh, Monsieur Chachignot, I beseech you, do not press us so hard. You know he has work now. Only give him time enough to pay you. That is all he asks."

"I have given him time enough; I have given him altogether too long," answered the voice of an old peasant. The words were mumbled through

his toothless jaws; the tone of the voice was cruel. "The sheriff must tend to this matter now. He may do as he chooses. Hallo! — Eugène!"

"'T is that scoundrel, Chachignot," the ferryman whispered to me. "Here! here!"

At that moment I saw arrive upon the bank a tall old man, tricked out in a frock-coat of coarse cloth, and a silk hat very tall and very new. This sunburned and wrinkled peasant, with his knotted finger-joints, deformed by hard work, looked more sunburned and sinister than ever, in the clothes of a gentleman. Obstinacy stamped his features, and a big hooked nose like an Apache Indian's, pinched lips, and wrinkles that maliciousness had written upon his face, lent to his countenance a ferocity quite in keeping with the name of Chachignot.

"Come, Eugène, make haste," he said, stepping on to the ferry, his voice trembling with anger. The farmer's wife approached him, as the ferryman was saying, "What 's the matter, Father Chachignot?"

"Oh! is it you, Bla he? Don't speak to me about it. I am furious. Those beggarly Maziliers!" And he pointed out with his fist a tiny, stunted, dark figure, going back along the hollow road, weeping.

"What have these people done to vex you?"

"What have they done? They owe me four quarters' rent, and all my vintage besides, and I can't get a single sou from them. And now I 'll put it in the sheriff's hands, and he will throw the blackguards into the street."

"But this Mazilier is a worthy fellow. Perhaps it

is not his fault that he cannot pay you. So many people have lost so much through this war."

The old peasant exploded.

"He's a fool! He might have made his fortune with the Prussians, but he would n't do it, not he! From the day the Prussians arrived, he closed his tavern, took down his sign. At other cafés they've done a fine business during the war, but he refused to sell a single sou's worth. Worse even than that. He managed to get himself put in prison through his insolence. He's a fool, I tell you. Why did he meddle with affairs that were no concern of his? Was he one of the military? All he had to do was to furnish wine and brandy to his customers. Then he would have been able to pay me, the rascal! Well! I'll teach him how to play patriot!"

And red with indignation, he moved about in his frock-coat, in the clownish fashion of a countryman used only to the blouse.

As he continued, the clear eyes of the farmer's wife, filled a few moments before with compassion for these Maziliers, grew hard and almost scornful. She was a peasant herself, and such entertain no very high opinion of those who refuse to make money when opportunity offers. At first she had said, "It's very hard for the wife," but a moment later she observed, "Yes, that's true, one should not turn his back upon his luck." Her conclusion was, "You are right, old man; when one owes he must pay." Chachignot repeated again and again through his clenched teeth, —

"He 's a fool! He 's a fool!"

The ferryman, who was listening to them both, although busied in steering the raft along with his pole, felt that he ought to speak now.

"Don't be so cruel, Father Chachignot; what good will it do you to go to the sheriff? What would you gain by making these poor wretches sell their all? Wait a little. You can afford to do that."

The old man turned upon him as if bitten.

"Yes, I 'd advise you to talk, you, a —— good-for-nothing! You are another of those —— patriots! Is n't it a shame? Five children and not a sou for them, but he must amuse himself firing off cannons, which no one compelled him to do; and I put it to you, monsieur" (I believe the miserable wretch addressed myself!)," what good has all that sort of thing done us? Himself for example, what did he gain by it? He got his face battered and lost a good position he had. And now look at him, living like a gypsy in a hole open to every wind that blows, his children sickening from it, his wife breaking her back over the wash-tub. Is n't he a fool too?"

Anger flashed in the ferryman's eyes. I saw the scar upon his wan face deepen, and grow whiter, but he was able to restrain himself, and vented his rage upon the pole, which he shoved into the sand so roughly that he almost twisted it. A word more might have cost him even the place he had, for M. Chachignot is an authority in that part of the country. He is one of the municipal council.

THE COLOR SERGEANT.

I.

THE regiment was fighting upon an embankment of the railroad, and served as a target for the whole Prussian army, massed opposite them, under shelter of the woods. Officers cried, "Lie down!" but no one was willing to obey, and the valiant regiment remained standing at its post, grouped about the ensign. Under that expanse of sky reddened by the setting sun, with pasture-lands and fields of ripening wheat in their rear, this body of soldiers, harassed by the enemy, enveloped in dense clouds of smoke, reminded one of a herd of cattle surprised upon the open plain by the first whirlwind announcing the approach of a terrible storm.

A fire of shot and shell rained upon the talus formed by the embankment. Nothing could be heard but the crackling of the fusillade, the sound of canteens falling heavily into the ditch, and the lingering echo of bullets, which vibrated from one end of the battlefield to the other, like the tense strings of some sinister, resounding instrument.

From time to time the flag, borne aloft above all, stirred by the breath of the fusillade, fell amid

clouds of smoke. And then, drowning the sound of the firings, of the death-rattle and the curses of the wounded, rose a stern and dauntless voice, "To the flag, boys! to the flag!" And through the red mist could be seen, dimly, the shadowy form of an officer rushing forward, and the heroic ensign, restored to life again, soared once more above the field of battle.

Twenty-two times it fell; twenty-two times its staff, still warm from the clasp of the dying hand which relinquished it, was seized again, and borne aloft, and when the sun had set, and all that remained of the regiment, a mere handful of men, slowly beat the retreat, all that was left of the flag was a mere shred in the hands of Sergeant Hornus, the twenty-third standard-bearer of that day.

II.

THIS Sergeant Hornus was an old fellow who had served three terms, scarcely knew enough to sign his own name, and had taken twenty years to win his sergeant's stripes. All the wretchedness of a foundling's life, all the brutalizing influences of the barracks showed themselves in his low, overhanging forehead, and back bent beneath the constant burden of his knapsack, — showed themselves too in that stolid bearing characteristic of a soldier in the ranks. And besides, he had a slight impediment in his speech; but to be color-sergeant does not require much eloquence. The very evening of

the battle his colonel said to him, "You have the flag, my brave fellow; keep it."

And then, upon his poor field-cloak that had weathered so many battles and storms, upon that cloak all faded and worn, the cantinière sewed the golden stripe of a sub-lieutenant.

Henceforth that humble life had but one proud aim. Suddenly the old soldier's form grew erect. That poor creature, who had marched all his life with bent shoulders and downcast eyes, from that day bore himself boldly, his glance constantly upraised towards that bit of tattered cloth, that he might see it fluttering above him, and carry it erect and high — so high that not death, nor treason, nor defeat could touch it.

You never saw a happier man than Hornus upon the day when a battle occurred, his staff clasped tightly in both hands, and firmly held in its leather sheath. He never spoke, he scarcely moved. He was as solemn as a priest. It seemed as though he carried some consecrated thing. All his energy, all his strength was in the fingers that curled about that beautiful gilded tatter of a flag against which the bullets rushed; his whole soul flashed in the eyes which hurled defiance at the Prussians, facing them squarely, with a look that seemed to say, "Come on! Try to take it from me!" But no one made the attempt, not even death itself. After Borny, after Gravelotte, the most murderous battles of the campaign, the flag emerged, gashed, rent, pierced with wounds, but no one bore it for a moment except old Hornus.

III.

THEN September came, with the army before Metz, — the blockade, and that long halt in the mire, when the cannon rusted, while the first soldiers in the world, demoralized by inaction, without food, without news, died of fever and ennui at the foot of their guns. Both commanders and soldiers had lost all confidence; not so old Hornus. He alone still had faith. That tattered tricolor was all in all to him, and as long as he perceived that it was still there, he could not realize that anything had been lost. Unfortunately, as there was no longer any fighting, the colonel kept the colors in his own quarters, outside Metz, and the brave Hornus was almost like a mother that has put her child out to nurse. He thought of his flag ceaselessly. And when he grew weary and could endure it no longer, he set out for Metz as fast as he could, and merely because of the fact that he had seen it, and always in the same place, resting quietly against the wall, he returned thence full of courage and patience, and under his wet tent dreamed dreams of battle and of marching on to victory, with the tricolors unfurled to the breeze, and floating yonder above the Prussian trenches.

But one day, at an order of Marshal Bazaine's, all these illusions crumbled. That morning, when Hornus awoke, he found the entire camp in an uproar, the soldiers standing in groups, greatly ex-

cited and incensed, uttering cries of rage, and all raising their clenched fists towards the same quarter of the town, as though their anger were aimed at one culprit alone. Cries of "Away with him! Shoot him!" were heard. They said what they would. The officers did not attempt to hinder, but walked apart from them, and with bent heads, as if ashamed to look their men in the face. And indeed there was cause for shame, for to one hundred and fifty thousand men, well-armed and still able for service, had just been read the marshal's order, which handed them over to the enemy, without even a combat.

"And the colors?" demanded Hornus, growing pale.

The colors were to be delivered with the rest, the guns, what remained of the equipages, — in short, everything.

"*To . . . To . . . Tonnerre de Dieu!*" stammered the poor man. "But they shall never have mine!" and he started on a run towards the city.

IV.

THERE, too, all was excitement and stir. National guards, citizens, the militia were shouting and gesticulating. Deputations passed by on their way to the marshal murmuring as they went. But Hornus saw and heard nothing of all this. He was busy talking to himself, as he climbed the Rue du Faubourg.

"Take my colors from me! Ah! we shall see. Impossible! Who has the right to do that? Let him give to the Prussians what is his to give, his gilded coaches, his silver plate brought from Mexico; but this thing is my own, — it is my honor. I forbid any one to lay hands upon it."

He ran so fast, and his tongue stuttered so, that those bits of phrases were chopped in pieces. But all the same, lodged somewhere in his brain, he had an idea of his own, this old man! And it was clear enough, and it could not be driven out! He had resolved to seize the colors, run into the midst of the regiment with them, and rush upon the Prussians, with all who were ready to follow him.

When he reached the colonel's quarters, he was not allowed to enter. The colonel, furious himself at what had happened, would see no one. But Hornus could not take this hint.

He swore, shouted, bullied the orderly, insisting, "My colors! I will have them!"

Finally a window was opened.

"Is that you, Hornus?"

"Yes, my colonel, I."

"All the flags are at the Arsenal. You have only to go there, and you will get a receipt."

"A receipt? What is that for?"

"It is the marshal's order."

"But, colonel —"

"Oh, get out! and give us peace."

Old Hornus staggered like a drunken man.

"A receipt, a receipt," he repeated mechanically. At last he set out again, understanding one thing only, his colors were now at the Arsenal, and he must recover them at any cost.

V.

THE doors of the Arsenal stood wide open, that the Prussians' wagons might pass. There they waited, drawn up in line, in the courtyard. Hornus shuddered, as he entered. All the other color-bearers were there too, fifty or sixty officers, dejected and silent. And those sombre carts waiting in the rain, the men grouped, bare-headed, behind them; there was something funereal about it all!

In one corner were heaped all the flags of Bazaine's army, lying in utter confusion upon the muddy pavement. Nothing was more saddening than to see those gaudy shreds, those fragments of gold fringe, carved staffs, all those glorious trappings thrown upon the ground and soiled with mud and rain. An officer in charge lifted them one by one, and as his regiment was called each color-bearer advanced for his receipt. Two Prussian officers watched the loading of the flags, rigid and unmoved.

And thus ye departed, O sacred shreds of Glory, baring your wounds, trailing your folds along the pavement, like a bird with broken wings. So ye departed, bearing with you that shame which is the portion of all beautiful things, once they have been sullied; and a bit of France herself went with the

going of each flag; the sun of many a long day's march still lingered in your faded folds, where the mark of many a bullet guarded the memory of the nameless dead, slain by the shots chance hurled against the banner they defended.

"Hornus, it's your turn. They are calling you. Go and get your receipt."

As if he cared about that!

His flag was before him — his very own — the most beautiful, the most mutilated of all, and as he saw it again it seemed to him that he stood once more upon the talus. He heard the bullets whistle, the dented canteens, the voice of his colonel, "To the flag, boys! to the flag!" There he saw his twenty-two comrades stretched upon the field, and he the twenty-third, rushing on to raise the colors, to support the flag which tottered, for the arm that had held it had relaxed its hold. Ah, on that day he had sworn to defend, to protect that flag, even into death! and now —

Thinking of that, all his heart's blood seemed to surge to his brain. Intoxicated, dazed, he rushed upon the Prussian officer, seized that beloved ensign, and grasped it in both hands. He attempted to raise it as of old, erect and high, crying, "To the flag!" but his voice was lost in his throat. He felt the staff tremble, slip from his hands. In that enervating, deathlike atmosphere which weighs so heavily upon a conquered city, the flag itself was powerless to float; no valiant heart could breathe such an atmosphere and live. Old Hornus fell to earth, as though a stroke of lightning had crushed him.

THE DEATH OF CHAUVIN.

One Sunday in August, travelling in a railway coach just at the beginning of what was then termed the Hispano-Prussian Incident, I met him for the first time. Although I had never seen him before, I had no difficulty in recognizing him at once. Tall, lean, grizzled, a fiery face, nose like a buzzard's beak, and rolling eyes with an angry flame in them, and never relenting to amiability save for the illustrious gentleman who sat in the corner, decorated with the Cross of the Legion. As I noted the low, narrow forehead, stamped with obstinacy,— one of those foreheads which the same thought, working ceaselessly and ever in the same place, has at last dented with a single deep wrinkle,— something of over-credulity in his bearing, something of the political precisian in his manner, especially the terrific fashion in which he rolled the letter "r" when speaking of "Fr-r-rance," and of the "Fr-r-rench flag," caused me to exclaim to myself, "Here is Chauvin!"

And Chauvin indeed it was, Chauvin at his best, declaiming, gesticulating, belaboring the Prussians from the pages of his newspaper, Chauvin entering Berlin, his cane upraised, an intoxicated, deaf, blind, furious lunatic. Conciliation or delay impossible! — War! war! at any cost!

"But what if we are not prepared for that, Chauvin?"

"Monsieur, Frenchmen are always prepared for anything!" responded Chauvin, drawing himself up to his full height; from beneath his bristling moustache, an explosion of *r*'s rushed with such energy that the windows fairly trembled.

Irritating, foolish personage! How quickly I understood all the jeers, all the jesting songs that tradition had woven about his name, making a celebrity of this absurd creature!

After that first meeting I swore I would flee him, but through some singular fatality he seemed ever to be dogging my footsteps. On the very day in the Senate when M. de Grammont had solemnly announced to our conscript-fathers, "War is declared!" in the midst of forced acclamations, a formidable cry of "Vive la France!" rose from the galleries. And looking upward near the friezes, I saw Chauvin brandishing his lank arms. Some days later I ran across him again in the Opera, standing in Girardin's box, demanding to hear "le Rhin Allemand,"[1] and observing to the singers who had not as yet learned that classic, "To learn it will take longer than to take it!"[2]

Soon it appeared that this ubiquitous Chauvin had taken complete possession of Paris. Everywhere, at street-corners, on the boulevards, always perched upon some bench or table, this absurd

[1] Poem written in reply to *Die Wacht am Rhein.* — TR.

[2] Chauvin puns: "*Il faudra donc plus de temps pour l'apprendre que pour le prendre!*"— TR.

Chauvin appeared before me; wherever drums were beating, flags floating, the strains of some Marseillaise sounding, there was Chauvin, distributing cigars to the soldiers about to leave, hailing the ambulances, that hot head of his rising above the crowd, inciting them whilst he roared, clamored, and invaded every spot, until it almost seemed that there were six hundred thousand Chauvins in Paris. Truly, one could not have escaped this intolerable figure, unless he had shut himself up at home, and locked doors and windows.

And how was it possible to remain in one place after Wissembourg, Forbach, and all that series of disasters which made that mournful month of August seem like one long nightmare, with scarcely a waking moment, the nightmare of a feverish, oppressive summer? How could one refrain from mingling with that restless, moving multitude, running in search of news, of fresh bulletins, promenading all night long beneath the gas-jets, their faces full of terror and consternation. And no night of all that I did not encounter Chauvin. He passed along the boulevards, advancing from group to group, delivering a peroration in the midst of a silent crowd, — overflowing with hope, with good news, sure of success despite everything, repeating to you twenty times in succession that Bismarck's white cuirassiers had been crushed to the last man!

Singular fact. Already Chauvin had ceased to impress me as before. He no longer seemed to me as ridiculous as of old. I did not believe a single word he was saying, but what of that? It delighted

me merely to listen to him. In spite of his blindness, his insane pride, his ignorance, there was in this diabolical creature a passionate, persistent energy which acted like a vital flame warming the heart.

And we had need of such a flame, during the long months of the siege, during that terrible winter when we lived upon horse-flesh and bread fit only for the dogs. The very aspect of Parisians seemed to say, "Were it not for Chauvin, Paris would not have held out for a week!" From the beginning Trochu had said, "They can enter when they will!"

"They will never enter!" said Chauvin. Chauvin had faith, Trochu had none. What was that to Chauvin? He still believed in notaries' plans, in Bazaine, in sorties; every night he listened to Chanzy's cannons booming at Étampe, the sharpshooters of Faidherbe behind Enghien, and, what was most wonderful of all, even the rest of us heard them, so deeply had the spirit of this heroic imbecile entered our souls.

Brave Chauvin! Who but he was ever the first to sight in a sky livid, overhanging, and full of snow, the tiny white wing of some carrier pigeon! When Gambetta sent us one of his eloquent Tarasconnades, it was Chauvin's powerful voice that declaimed it at the door of every *mairie*. During the keen December nights, when the long lines of people stood shivering before the butchers' shops, chilled and weary with waiting, Chauvin bravely led the line, and thanks to him, that famished crowd

found they still had strength enough to laugh and sing, and dance in the snow.

"*Le, lon, la, laissez-les passer, les Prussiens dans la Lorraine,*" chanted Chauvin, and galoshes clattered, beating time, and for a moment the warm red of health returned to poor wan faces framed in woollen hoods. Alas! of what avail was it all? One evening, crossing Rue Drouot, I saw an anxious crowd pressing silently towards the *mairie*, and in that mighty Paris, where now not a light or a carriage was to be seen, I heard the grandiloquent voice of Chauvin, solemnly proclaiming, "We hold the heights of Montretout!" A week later, all was over.

From that day Chauvin appeared to me only at rare intervals. Two or three times I saw him on the boulevard, gesticulating, talking of *r-r-revenge*, — for that letter "r" still rolled upon his tongue. But no one listened to him any longer. Fashionable Paris languished, pined for its former pleasures; laboring Paris was in no pleasant mood. Vainly did poor Chauvin brandish his long arms; the former groups, instead of surrounding him, scattered at his approach.

"A regular bore!" said some. "Spy!" cried others. Then came the days of insurrection, of the red flag, and the Commune, — Paris in the power of riotous mobs. Chauvin, himself a suspect, no longer dared to stir abroad. Then came the famous day when the Vendôme Column was pulled down. Of course he had to be there, in a corner of the Place. The crowd guessed it was he. The

street-Arabs insulted him, though they did not see him.

"Hallo! there's Chauvin!" they exclaimed, and when the Column fell, the Prussian officers, drinking champagne before a window at head-quarters, raised their glasses, roaring "Ha, ha, ha! Mossié Chaufin."

Till the twenty-third of May, Chauvin gave no further sign of life. Crouching at the bottom of a cellar, the unfortunate was reduced to despair when he heard French shells go whizzing over the roofs of Paris. At last one day, between two cannonades, he ventured to set foot outside.

The street was deserted, and seemed wider than when he had seen it last. On one side rose the barricade, full of menace, with its cannons and red flag, on the other two short chasseurs of Vincennes advanced, keeping close to the wall, and stooping, their guns pointed. The troops of Versailles had just entered Paris.

Chauvin's heart bounded. "Vive la France!" he cried, darting towards the soldiers. His voice was lost in the midst of a fusillade from opposite sides. Through some sinister misunderstanding, this unfortunate was a target for both sides, the victim of a twofold hate which slew him. Upon that road whose stones had been uptorn, his body fell. It lay there for two days, with arms out-stretched, and with rigid face.

Thus perished Chauvin, martyr of our civil wars He was the last Frenchman!

ALSACE! ALSACE!

I HAVE most delightful memories of a journey I made some years ago through Alsace. Not that insipid railroad-journey which leaves naught behind but the recollection of a country cut by rails and telegraph wires. My journey was afoot, knapsack upon my shoulders, with a good, stout stick for my comrade, and a companion who was not too talkative. The best way to travel; and what vivid memories one retains of all he has seen in that fashion!

Especially of late, now that Alsace is closed against us, all my former impressions of that lost land return to me. What delicious surprises awaited one upon those long rambles through that beautiful country, where the woods raised their dark background like great, green curtains, in the rear of peaceful villages flooded with sunshine! Where, at some winding of the mountains, one would sight belfry-towers and factories, well supplied with streams, saw-mills, wind-mills, and here and there some striking figure in unfamiliar costume, darting up from the fresh verdure of the plain.

Every morning we were up with the sun.

"Mossié, Mossié! it is four o'clock!" the inn-servant would call to us. We jumped out of bed

quickly, and our knapsacks buckled, groped our way down the frail little stairway, over which every step echoed. Downstairs, before setting out we drank a glass of *kirsch* in one of those big inn-kitchens, where an early fire was kindling with a crackling of twigs that brought to mind the remembrance of the fog clinging to damp windows. We set out.

It requires an effort at first. At that early hour all the weariness of the preceding night returns. Our eyes, and the air as well, are full of slumber. By degrees the damps of the early dew are scattered, the morning mist evaporates in the sun. Once started, we trudge on. When the heat becomes too oppressive, we halt, and breakfast by a spring, or a brook, and then fall asleep in the grass, lulled by the murmuring of the water. We are awakened by the noise of a big bee which just grazes us, whizzing by like a bullet. Cooler than before, we set out again. After the sun has begun to descend, the road does not seem as long as before. We seek a resting-place, an asylum for the night, and thoroughly weary, fall asleep, sometimes in the bed of an inn, sometimes in a barn left open, at the foot of a haystack, in the open air, disturbed by no other sounds than the murmur of birds, the chirping of insects among the leaves, light, springing steps and silent flocks, all that nocturnal music which, when one is very weary, falls upon his ear as if part of a dream.

What were the names of those charming Alsatian villages which we met at regular intervals at the

road's end? I cannot now recall the name of one of them, and in fact they all resembled each other so closely, especially as we travelled through Haut-Rhin, that after we had passed through a number of them at different times, it did not seem to me that we had seen more than one. There was the main road, and the houses looking upon it all had windows with tiny panes, encased in leaden frames, garlanded with hop and rose vines; over the latticed gates leaned old men, smoking their big pipes, or women stooped, calling their children, playing upon the road. In the morning when we passed by, all was wrapped in slumber; we could scarcely hear the rustling of straw in the stables, or the panting breath of the dogs under the gates.

The village we reached two leagues further on is just awaking. The sound of the opening of shutters is heard, the splashing of bucketfuls of water; gutters overflow; the cows troop lazily to the watering-troughs, brushing away the flies with their long tails. Farther on, the next village looks just like the preceding one, but about it broods the deep silence of a summer afternoon, interrupted only by the drowsy sing-song of the village school, and the monotonous hum of bees scaling the clambering vines which reached to the very top of each châlet. And always one is sure of lighting upon some little corner which reminds him that the village is merely a part of the province, — sometimes a white, two-story house with a new, shining insurance-sign upon it, or one sights a notary's scutcheon, or a doctor's bell. The passer-by

hears the notes of a piano, and strains of a waltz, somewhat antiquated it is true, float to him through the green blinds, as he stands upon the sunny road. Later, twilight descends; the cattle come home, spinners are returning, all is bustle and commotion! The doorways are full of people, troops of little flaxen-heads in the streets. The windows are aflame with the last ray of the dying sun, coming one knows not whence.

I still recall with delight a Sabbath morning in an Alsatian village, — service-time, the streets deserted, the houses emptied, but here and there an old man sunning himself before some doorway; the church full of people, and, streaming through its panes, the delicate rose-tints of tapers burning by day, — the plain-chant coming in fitful bursts along the passage, a choir-boy in scarlet cassock hurriedly crossing the Place, bare-headed, censer in hand, to get a light at the baker's shop.

Sometimes for whole days we would not enter a single village. We sought the shade of many a coppice, of untrodden byways and delicate thickets fringing the Rhine, spots where its beautiful green waters were lost in marsh land swarming with insects. Through the slender tracery of many a branch we could see the great river for miles and miles, laden with rafts, floats loaded with grass cut on the islands, and seeming themselves like tiny floating islands borne on by the current; farther on, the canal leading from the Rhône to the Rhine — with its long border of poplars, their green tops almost touching each other, reflected

in those familiar waters, narrowed, hemmed in by artificial banks. Here and there the small lodge of the lock-keeper was seen, and children running barefoot over the bars of the lock, and amidst splashing of foam huge floats loaded with wood advanced slowly across the entire breadth of the canal.

After we had had enough of zigzag and rambling paths, we would retrace our steps along the white main road which leads straight towards Basle, a cool, refreshing road, shaded by walnut trees — the chain of the Vosges on the right, the Black Forest on the opposite side.

And when the July sun grew too oppressive, oh! what delightful halts I have made at the edge of that road leading to Basle, stretched at full length in the dry grass of some ditch, listening to the music of partridges calling from field to field, and overhead the main road with its dismal sounds — a carter's oath, a passing bell, the creaking of an axle, the sound of a pickaxe breaking stones, the hurried gallop of a gendarme, — at which a flock of geese scatter in terror, — peddlers bent beneath their packs, the letter-carrier, his blue blouse trimmed with red braid, suddenly leaving the highway, to disappear from sight upon a little cross-road bordered with wild hedges, at the end of which one feels sure of coming upon a hamlet, a farmhouse, an isolated life.

And then those delightful surprises of a journey afoot, — those short cuts that lengthen indefinitely, the deceptive tracks of carriage-wheels, the

trail of horses' hoofs which lead straight to some field, the deaf gates which will not open at your call, the inns full of people when you arrive — and the sudden shower, that delicious summer-shower which the warm air evaporates so quickly, though the steaming plains, the fleece of flocks, and even the herdsman's coat attest its presence.

I remember how a terrific storm surprised us in this fashion as we were crossing the woods, descending the Ballon d'Alsace. As we quitted the inn at its summit, the clouds were literally beneath us. A few pines raised their tops above them, but as we descended we actually entered a land of wind and rain and hail. Soon we were imprisoned, enmeshed in a perfect network of lightnings. Almost at our feet a fir fell with a crash, struck by lightning; and whilst we went tumbling down a short *schlitage*, we saw through a film of gushing water a group of tiny maidens who had sought shelter amongst the rocks. Terrified, pressing closely against each other, their hands had all they could do to hold their calico aprons and their small wicker-baskets filled with black bilberries freshly picked. On each tiny berry glistened a point of light, and the little black eyes which darted at us from that hiding-place in the rocks resembled those shining berries. The great fir lying prone upon the descent, the reverberation of the thunder, the sight of these tiny rovers of the forest so charming in their tatters, — it all reminded one of some tale of Canon Schmidt's.

And what a delightful flame welcomed us when

we reached Rouge-Goutte! What a splendid fire to dry our clothing, while we heard an omelette crackling, — that inimitable omelette of Alsace, crisp and golden as a cake.

The morning after the storm I saw a sight which impressed me.

On the road to Dannemarie at a turn of the hedge was a magnificent field of wheat, cut down, despoiled, soaked with the rain, its broken stalks spreading upon the ground in all directions. The heavy and ripened ears had dropped their treasure in the mud, and hosts of tiny birds were feeding upon that lost harvesting, hopping about the hollows filled with wet straw, scattering the wheat far and wide. A sinister sight, this pillaging beneath that clear sky and in the bright sunshine. Regarding his ruined field, stood a great, tall peasant, bent in figure, clothed in the costume of ancient Alsace. Genuine sorrow could be read upon his features, yet at the same time a certain calm and resignation and I know not what vague hope — as if he would tell himself that though his harvest was despoiled, the earth beneath belonged to him always, — fertile, quickening, faithful, and that while the soil remained his own he need not despair.

THE CARAVANSARY.

I CANNOT recall without a smile the sense of disenchantment I experienced on catching my first glimpse of an Algerian caravansary. That delightful word, which casts a spell over all the Oriental and enchanted Land of the Thousand and One Nights, had conjured in my imagination long vistas of arched galleries, Moorish courts planted with palm trees, cool and refreshing streamlets dripping, with melancholy music, upon mosaic pavements, and everywhere, stretched upon mats, travellers in Turkish slippers, smoking their pipes in the shade of some terrace, while from caravans halting under the noonday sun, arose the heavy odor of musk, of scorched leather, attar of roses, and golden tobacco.

Words are always more poetic than the objects they describe. Instead of the caravansary I imagined, I found an ancient inn, of the Île-de-France type, located on the highway, a stopping-place for carriers and post-chaises, with its branch of holly, its stone bench at the doorway, and surrounded with courtyards, sheds, barns, and stables.

Far enough removed it was from my dream of the Thousand and One Nights, but after the first sense of disillusion had passed away, I was quick

to perceive the picturesque charm of this out-of-the-way Frankish inn, a hundred leagues from Algiers, and standing in the midst of an immense plain, against which rose in relief innumerable tiny hills, crowding closely together, and blue as the waves of the sea. On one hand, a pastoral of the Orient fields of maize, a stream bordered with oleander, and rising here and there the white cupola of some ancient tomb; on the other side, the main road, lending the bustle and animation of European life to this Old Testament scene. It was this blending of the Orient with the Occident, this flavor of modern Algeria, which gave to the caravansary of Madame Schontz such an amusing and original physiognomy.

I can still see the Tlemcen diligence entering the grand courtyard, in the midst of camels squatted about, heavy laden with burnouses and ostrich eggs. In the sheds negroes are making their couscous, planters are unpacking a model plough, and Maltese are playing cards upon a wheat-measure. Travellers alight, and fresh relays of horses are brought. The courtyard is completely blocked. A red-coated spahi is performing a *fantasia* for the benefit of the maids of the inn. Two gendarmes have halted in front of the kitchen, and are draining a bumper without dismounting. In a corner some Algerian Jews in blue hose, and caps on their heads, are sleeping upon woollen bales, waiting for the market to open; for twice a week the Arabs hold a great fair before the walls of the caravansary.

On those days, when I opened my windows I saw before me a forest of tents scattered about in confusion, a surging, clamorous crowd in gay colors; the red *chechias* of the Kabyles blazed like wild poppies in a field, and until evening there were continual cries, disputes, and a swarm of dusky figures moved back and forth in the sunlight. As twilight came on, they folded their tents; men, horses, and all disappeared, as might one of those tiny worlds of innumerable motes which are lodged in a sunbeam. The plateau was deserted, the plain grew silent again, and the twilight of the Orient tinged the sky with its tender iris-tints, as fugitive as the colors upon a soap-bubble. For ten minutes the sky was tinged with rose. There was, I remember, at the entrance to the caravansary, an old well, and it was so completely bathed in the glimmering sunset that its well-worn curbstone seemed to be of rosy marble; the well-bucket looked a flame, and drops of fire glistened upon the rope. Then that wonderful light, like the flashing of rubies, died down, and lilac hues grew in the sky. These too faded out, and the sky became dark and sombre. Indistinct sounds began to traverse the plain, and suddenly in the silence and darkness burst forth the savage music of an African night, — the bewildered clamor of storks, the barking of jackals and hyenas, and at long intervals a sullen roar almost solemn, which made the horses quiver in their stables, the camels tremble in their sheds.

Oh! how pleasant it seemed, after shivering

amid the hosts of darkness, to emerge, and to descend into the dining-room of the caravansary, and find there laughter, warmth, light, and the charming display of fresh linen and sparkling crystal which is so in keeping with French taste. And to do the honors of the table, were Madame Schontz, an ancient Mulhouse beauty, and pretty Mademoiselle Schontz, her blooming cheeks slightly tanned, her Alsacian head-dress with its black tulle wings reminding one of a wild rose of Guebviller or Rouge-Goutte upon which a butterfly had alighted. Was it the charm of the young girl's eyes? Was it because of that light Alsatian wine which her mother poured for you at dessert, sparkling and golden as champagne? Certain it is that the dinners of this caravansary were famed far and wide among the camps of the South; sky-blue tunics mingled with the short coats of hussars, braided and decorated with frogs, and far into the night lights might be seen burning in the windows of the great inn.

The repast ended, the table removed, the old piano which had peacefully slumbered in a corner for twenty years, was opened and French airs were played, or to a Lauterbach of some sort, a young Werther, sabretache at his side, would dance a waltz with Mademoiselle Schontz. In the midst of the somewhat noisy, military gayety, the rattling of aiguillettes, of long-swords and brandy-glasses, rose the languorous rhythm of the dance, two hearts beating in unison to its measure and absorbed in the mazes of the waltz, their vows of eternal love

ceasing only with the last strain. It would be hard to picture a more charming scene.

Sometimes, of an evening, the great double-door of the inn would open, and horses pranced into the courtyard. It was some aga of the neighborhood, who, wearying of his wives, desired to taste of occidental life, listen to the piano of the *roumis*, and drink the wine of France. "*One drop of wine is accursed*," says Mohammed in the Koran, but there are compromises even with the Law. As each glass was poured him, the aga, before drinking, took one drop upon his finger, shook it off gravely, and, that accursed drop once disposed of, he drank the rest without compunction of conscience. Then, quite dazed by the music and the lights, the Arab would recline upon the floor, enveloped in his burnous, — not uttering a word, but showing his white teeth with a laugh, and following the whirls of the dance with kindling eyes.

Alas! where are they now, — Mademoiselle Schontz's partners in the dance? Where are the sky-blue tunics, the charming hussars, with slender waists? Sleeping in the hop-fields of Wissenbourg, in the grassy meadows of Gravelotte. And no one comes now to drink the light wine of Alsace at Madame Schontz's caravansary. Both women are gone; they died, musket in hand, defending their inn, set on fire by the Arabs. Of the ancient hostelry once so full of life, nothing remains but the walls, the great crumbling framework of a building, so suggestive of death; these are still standing, but they are completely calcined. Jackals prowl

about in the courtyards. Here and there the fragment of a stable or a shed, which the flames have spared, rises like a living apparition, and the wind, that wind of evil omen, which for two years has stormed against our unhappy France, sweeping from the farthermost borders of the Rhine unto Laghouat, rushing from the Saar to the Sahara, passes on filled with plaintive echoes, wails through the ruins of the caravansary, beating against its gates mournfully.

DECORATED THE FIFTEENTH OF AUGUST.

ONE evening in Algeria, at the close of a day's hunt, a violent storm surprised me on the plain of Chélif, at some leagues from Orléansville. Nowhere the shade of a village or even of a caravansary in sight. Nothing but dwarf-palms, lentisk-thickets, and great stretches of plough-land reaching as far as eye could see. Moreover, the Chélif, swollen by the shower, had begun to roll in an alarming fashion, and I stood in some danger of passing the night out in a swamp. Fortunately, the civil-interpreter of the Bureau at Milianah, who accompanied me, chanced to remember that quite near us, hidden behind a slight elevation, there was a tribe whose aga he knew, and we decided to go thither, and throw ourselves upon his hospitality for a night.

These Arab villages of the plain are so completely concealed among cactuses and Barbary fig-trees, their *gourbis* of dried earth are built so close to the ground, that we were in the midst of the village before we had perceived it. Was it the hour, the rain, the intense silence that impressed me? I do not know, but an air of sadness seemed to brood over the land, as if the burden of some terrible anxiety had suspended every activity. All about,

scattered in the fields, was the neglected harvest. The wheat and barley had been gathered elsewhere, but here it was rotting upon the ground. Rusted ploughs and harrows lay about in the rain, apparently forgotten. All the tribe seemed to wear the same air of sadness, raggedness, and indifference. The dogs scarcely barked at our approach. From time to time, from within one of the gourbis, were heard the cries of a child, and a boy's shaven head, or the ragged haik of an old man could be seen in the thicket. Here and there young asses stood shivering among the bushes; but not a man, not a horse, was in sight; it seemed as if one had fallen upon war-times, as if every cavalier had departed from the place months before.

The aga's house, a species of long farm-building, with white walls and without windows, seemed as destitute of life as were the surroundings. We found the stables open, boxes and mangers empty, and not a groom in sight to receive our horses.

"Let us go into the Moorish café," said my companion. The *café maure* of an Arabian castellan serves as a sort of reception-salon, a house within a house, reserved for transient guests, — a place where these good Mussulmans, courteous and affable to an extreme, find opportunity to exercise their hospitable virtues, while preserving that privacy of family life which the Law commands. The *café maure* of Aga Si-Sliman was open and silent, like the stables. The high walls were coated with lime, decorated with trophies of war and ostrich-feathers; a long low divan ran about the hall, and

it was dripping from the torrents of rain with which the storm had pelted the entrance. Yet the café was not empty. First we saw the *cafetier* himself, an old Kabyle, in tatters, squatting with his head between his knees, beside a brazier turned upside down. Then we caught a glimpse of the aga's son, a beautiful boy, but feverish and pale; he reclined upon the divan, rolled up in a black burnous, two great greyhounds at his feet.

As we entered, there was no sound or sign of life. At the utmost, the head of one of the greyhounds may have moved, the boy perhaps deigned to glance in our direction, his beautiful dark eyes feverish and languid.

"And Si-Sliman, where is he?" asked the interpreter.

The old servant made a vague motion of the head in the direction of the horizon. The gesture seemed to say that his master had gone far, very far. We understood that Si-Sliman had departed upon some long and important journey, but as the rain would not permit of our setting out again, the interpreter, addressing a few words in Arabic to the aga's son, told him that we were friends of his father, and asked shelter for the night. The boy at once rose, and in spite of the fever which was consuming him, gave orders to the cafetier; then motioning us towards the divan, with a courteous air that seemed to say, "You are my guests," he saluted us, Arab-fashion, his head bowed, a kiss at the tip of his fingers, and wrapping his burnous proudly about him, left the hall with all

the gravity of one who was an aga and master of the house.

Left behind, the cafetier relighted his brazier, set upon it two boilers of microscopic size, and whilst he was making the coffee, we sought to obtain from him some details concerning his master's voyage, and the cause of the wretched condition of the tribe. The Kabyle spoke quickly, with the gestures of an old woman, but in a beautiful guttural, which was sometimes precipitated, sometimes interrupted by fits of silence, when we could hear the rain dropping upon the mosaic of the interior courtyards, the boilers singing, and the barking of jackals, scattered in thousands upon the plain.

This is what had befallen the unfortunate Si-Sliman. Four months before, on the 15th of August, he had received that famous decoration of the Legion of Honor, which he had awaited many years. He was the only aga of the province who had not already received it. All the others were knights, officers; two or three even wore about their haiks the big ribbon of Commander, and blew their noses upon it, innocently enough (many a time have I seen Bach' Aga Boualem make this use of his ribbon). What had prevented Si-Sliman from receiving the decoration was a quarrel he had had with his *chef de bureau arabe*, over a game of cards, and the military fraternity is so all-powerful in Algeria that, although the name of the aga had for ten years stood upon the list of proposed recipients, it was all to no avail. Consequently you can perhaps imagine the joy of brave

Si-Sliman when, the morning of the 15th of August, a spahi from Orléansville came to bring him the tiny gilded casket containing the brevet of Legionary, and Baïa, best-beloved of his four wives, fastened upon his camel's-hair burnous the cross of France. This furnished the tribe with the occasion for numerous revels and interminable *fantasias*. All night long, tambourines and reed-pipes resounded. There were dances, rejoicings, bonfires; I know not how many sheep were slain for the feast; and that nothing might be lacking on the occasion, a famous improvisator of Djendel composed in honor of Si-Sliman a magnificent cantata which began thus:

"Saddle thy coursers, O Wind!
Bear the glad tidings afar!"

The next morning, at break of day, Si-Sliman called to arms his contingent forces, both the ordinary and the reserve, and set out for Algiers with his cavaliers, that he might thank the governor in person. At the gates of the city his band paused according to custom. The aga presented himself unaccompanied at the Government Palace, saw the Duke of Malakoff, and assured the latter of his devotion to France, in a few pompous phrases of that Oriental style which is considered figurative and poetic, since for three thousand years it has likened all youths to palm trees, all women to gazelles. Having performed his duty at the palace, he proceeded to the upper town, permitting himself to be seen paying his devotions to the mosque as he passed on, distributing silver among the

poor, visiting barbers and embroiderers, buying for his wives perfumed waters, brocaded, flowered silks, blue corselets adorned with golden passementerie, and red cavalier's-boots for his young aga, paying for everything without questioning the price, and scattering his joy abroad in beautiful douros. He was to be seen in the bazaars, seated upon Smyrna rugs, drinking coffee at the doors of Moorish shops, the shop-keepers offering him congratulations. A crowd pressed about him curiously, whispering, "Look! that is Si-Sliman! The *Emberour* has just sent him the Cross." And many a little Morisca, returning from the bath and nibbling pastry, from beneath her white veil sent prolonged glances of admiration towards that beautiful new silver cross worn so proudly. Ah! life has indeed its great moments!

Evening come, Si-Sliman prepared to rejoin his band, and he had just mounted when a *chaouch* from the prefecture rushed towards him, quite out of breath.

"Here you are, Si-Sliman!—I have been hunting for you everywhere. Be quick! The governor wishes to speak with you."

Si-Sliman followed him, not disquieted in the least. But in crossing the Moorish courtyard of the palace he chanced to encounter his *chef de bureau Arabe*, who regarded him with an evil smile. That smile upon the face of an enemy terrified him, and he trembled as he entered the governor's chamber. The marshal, sitting astride a chair, received him.

"Si-Sliman!" he said with his usual brutality, and in that famous nasal voice that ever caused those about him to tremble, "Si-Sliman, my boy, I am very sorry. There has been a mistake. The decoration was not intended for you at all. It was for the kaïd of the Zoug-Zougs. You must return the cross."

The beautiful bronze face of the aga was tinged with sudden red, as if from the reflection of some forge fire. A convulsive movement shook his tall body. His eyes flamed. But the flash lasted only for a second. His eyes were lowered almost instantly; he bowed before the governor.

"Thou art master here, my Lord," he said, and unfastening the cross from his breast, he placed it upon a table. His hands trembled. Tears quivered at the end of his long eyelashes. Even old Pélissier was touched.

"Come, come, my brave, you will receive it next year;" and he extended his hand with an air almost friendly. The aga feigned that he did not see it, bowed without responding, and departed. He knew just how much value to attach to this promise of the marshal's, and suddenly realized that a mere bureau intrigue had brought this humiliation upon him.

News of his disgrace had already spread through the city. The Jews of Rue Bab-Azoun chuckled as they saw him pass. The Moorish merchants, on the contrary, looked away from him, pity stamped upon their faces; and it was this very pity that pained him more than the sneers of the others.

He hastened on, keeping close to the walls, seeking the lanes that were darkest, most secluded. The spot from which his cross had been plucked seemed to burn him, as though an open wound were there. And all the time he thought to himself, "What will my horsemen say? What will my wives say?"

Then followed wild outbursts of rage. He imagined himself waging a holy war yonder, upon the frontiers of Maroc ever reddened with incendiary fires and battle, or rushing through the streets of Algiers at the head of his band, pillaging the Jews, massacring the Christians, and at length slain himself, amidst a general tumult in which his shame should be blotted out. All these things seemed to him far less impossible than to return to his tribe. Suddenly, in the midst of his schemes of vengeance, a thought of the Emperor occurred to him like a sudden gleam of light.

The Emperor! For Si-Sliman, as for all the Arabs, that name was the embodiment of the highest justice and power. For these Mussulmans of the decadence he was the true pillar of their faith; that other head at Stamboul appeared to these distant sons as an imaginary being, a sort of invisible pope who had preserved for himself no other power than the purely spiritual. And in the Hegira of to-day, we know how much value that power possesses.

But the *Emberour*, with his big cannon, his zouaves, his iron-clad navy! From the moment he thought of the Emperor, he felt that he was

saved. Surely the Emperor would restore Si-Sliman's cross to him. There would be a week's journey, but he was so sure of the result that he desired his band to remain at the gates of Algiers to await his return. The packet-boat left the next day, bearing him towards Paris, and he was as serene and composed as though departing on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Poor Si-Sliman! Four months ago he left, and the letters he sends to his wives do not hint of return as yet. For four months the unhappy aga has been wandering through the fogs of Paris, his days spent in running from one department to another, laughed at everywhere, caught within the formidable machinery of the French Administration, sent from bureau to bureau, soiling his burnouses against the wood-boxes of antechambers, anxiously awaiting an interview that will never come; and in the evening he is seen again — his tall, sombre figure ridiculous because of its very majesty — waiting for a key in the office of some lodging-house; and then he ascends to his own room, weary with tramping, with attempts that came to nothing, but lofty and proud as ever, clinging to a last hope, as furious in his zeal as some gambler who has staked his all, in pursuit of his honor.

All this time his cavaliers squatted about the Porte Bab-Azoun await him with the true Oriental fatalism of their race. His horses, tied to their pickets, neigh towards the sea. Among the tribe, all is suspense. The harvests rot upon the ground

for want of arms to gather them. Women and children count the days, their eyes ever turned towards Paris. And it is pathetic to see what ruin, how many hopes, how many fears, hang by that bit of red ribbon. And when will it all end?

"God alone knows," said the cafetier with a sigh, and looking through the open door he pointed with his bare arm across the sombre plain wrapped in violet mists, pointed towards the pale and slender crescent of the moon, climbing a cloudy sky.

MY KÉPI.

THIS morning I came across it again, where it had lain forgotten at the bottom of a closet; it was dust-stained, frayed at the edges, the figures were rusted, the color had faded, and it was almost shapeless. I could scarcely restrain a smile, and exclaimed, —

"Ah! There you are, my képi."

And suddenly I remembered that day towards the end of autumn, the warmth of the sunshine, the kindling of enthusiasm, — how I had gone down the street, proud of my new head-gear, knocking my gun against the shop-windows, as I went on my way to join the battalions of the Quarter and do service as citizen-soldier! Ah! he who had told me then that I was not going to save Paris, deliver France by my own unaided strength, would certainly have run the risk of receiving the point of my bayonet straight in the stomach.

There was such absolute faith in the national guard. In the public gardens and squares, along the avenues, at every corner, companies were gathering and numbering, — long lines in which blouses and uniforms, caps and képis, were seen side by side, for there was great haste. Every morning we who were new recruits assembled upon the

Place, beneath the low arcades, standing at the great gates in the draught and fog. After the roll-call, where hundreds of incongruous names mingled in a grotesque chaplet, the drill began. Arms straight at the sides, teeth clenched, the various divisions set out, keeping step, "Left, right! left, right!" and short and tall, infirm, *poseurs*, figures clad in uniforms that brought back memories of the stage, some of the new soldiers encumbered with immense blue bands that gave them the appearance of choristers, — all of us, however different our uniforms were, marched and faced about within our limited space with the utmost spirits and confidence.

All this would have seemed absurd enough had it not been for the deep bass of the cannon, a continual accompaniment, which lent freedom and scope to our manœuvres, drowned many a shrill and feeble command, atoned for many an awkwardness, many a blunder, and in this great melodrama of Paris Besieged lent just that sort of stage-music which proves itself so effective in the theatre, when the pathetic is to be added to a situation.

Finest sight of all when we mounted to the rampart! I still can picture myself on those foggy mornings, passing proudly before the Colonne de Juillet, and paying it military honors. "Carry — arms!" And then those long streets of Charenne, full of people, those slippery pavements where it was so difficult to mark step. Approaching the bastions, our drums would beat the charge,

Ran! Ran! I fancy now I am in the midst of it all again. It was so enchanting, that frontier of Paris, the green taluses with excavations for the cannon, the open tents full of animation, the smoke of bivouac fires, figures darkly outlined on the heights, — looking so diminutive as they wandered back and forth, — the tops of képis, and the points of bayonets rising here and there above the bags piled about.

Oh! my first night on guard, groping my way in the dark, in the rain, while the patrol passed on, jostling each other on the wet embankment, slipping out one by one, and leaving me, the last, perched above the Porte Montreuil at a formidable height. What beastly weather it was that night! In the deep silence that enfolded city and country nothing could be heard but the wind sweeping over the ramparts, making the sentinels bend before it, carrying away the password, and causing the panes of an old street-lamp on the road at the foot of the talus to rattle dismally. That infernal street-lamp! Every time I heard it I fancied it was the sabre of an Uhlan rattling, and I remained there, supporting arms, — "Who goes there?" ever on my lips. Then the rain grew colder. The gray of dawn began to appear in the direction of Paris. A tower, a cupola, could be distinguished. A cab was heard rumbling in the distance, a bell struck. The mighty city awoke from slumber, and shivering at the first moment of awaking, tossed about and gave signs of returning life. A cock crowed on the opposite side of the talus. At my

feet, beneath the still dark road over which my rounds were made, a sound of footsteps was heard, a rattling of iron, and in reply to my "Halt! who goes there?" uttered in a terrible tone, rose a little, timid, tremulous voice reaching me through the fog,—

"A woman selling coffee."

You smile? But what could be expected of us? These were the first days of the siege, and we fancied to ourselves, poor raw militia that we were, we imagined that the Prussians, under fire from the forts, would come to the foot of the ramparts, set their ladders there and scale them some fine night, in the midst of huzzas, with port fires moving to and fro in the darkness. Imagination anticipating such things as these, you can conceive that there were frequent alarms. Scarcely a night that the cry "To arms! to arms!" did not startle us from our sleep. Then men would shove and jostle each other in their haste to reach their guns, overturning them, while the startled officers exclaimed, "Keep cool! keep cool!" endeavoring thus to calm themselves. Later, at daybreak, we would perhaps discover that the enemy had been merely a runaway horse, capering about the fortification and nibbling the grass of the talus, and that our imaginations had mistaken one innocent animal for a whole troop of white cuirassiers, allowing it to serve as a target for an entire bastion in arms.

All these things my képi recalled to me — multitudinous emotions, various adventures and scenes: Nanterre, la Corneuve, le Moulin-Saquet, and

that delightful bend of the Marne where the intrepid Ninety-sixth saw fire for the first and last time. The Prussian batteries faced us, planted at the end of a road behind a thicket, and the smoke rising through the branches reminded one of some tranquil hamlet. Upon the unprotected track of the railroad where our chiefs had forgotten us, shells rained upon us with loud and terrible force, and ominous flashes were seen. Ah! my poor képi, there was no boasting that day, and again and again you made the military salute, lower perhaps than was fitting.

No matter! those are delightful memories; it is all slightly grotesque, no doubt, — still, a feather in the cap of patriotism. But alas! you recall other memories! Unhappily there were also those night-watches in Paris, our post some shop that was to let; within, the suffocating heat of a stove, the shiny benches; there were monotonous watches before the doors of some *mairie*, the Place covered with the slush of winter, which, melting, reflected the city in its gutters. While doing police-duty in the streets amid puddles of water, we would carry off drunken soldiers who had lost their way, women, and thieves; in the gray light of early morning we would return to our quarters weary, covered with dust, the smell of pipes and petroleum clinging to our clothing. And then there were those long days so foolishly spent, with elections of officers, attended by lengthy discussions, the tittle-tattle of each company, the farewell punches, and round upon round of brandy, men explaining each to the

other the plan of campaign, using matches to make their explanations clearer; there was the excitement of voting. Politics entered upon the scene, with her sister, righteous idleness. Hours were spent merely in lounging; difficult indeed to know what to do with one's self! And all that time wasted weighed upon a man as if he were surrounded by a lifeless atmosphere, making him desire to gesticulate, to keep in motion. There were hunts for spies, men entertained absurd suspicions of each other, and confidence equally exaggerated; they dreamed of a sortie *en masse*, of making a breach; all the follies and delirium of an imprisoned people had sway. These were the memories, hideous képi, that returned to me at sight of you. You too had your share in all these follies, and if on the day after Buzenval I had not tossed you to the top of a closet, had I done as so many others, who insisted on keeping their képis, decorating them with immortelles and gold stripes, merely to remain an odd number in some scattered battalion, who knows upon what barricade you might have dragged me at last? Ah! decidedly, képi of revolt and indiscipline, képi of idleness and drunkenness, of club life and gossip, képi of civil war, you deserve not even the waste corner which I allowed you in my closet.

Away with you! Into the waste-basket!

A TURCO OF THE COMMUNE.

HE was a little drummer of the *tirailleurs indigènes*.[1] His name was Kadour, he came from the tribe of Djendel, and he was one of that handful of *turcos* who dropped into Paris, following the fortunes of Vinoy's army. From Wissembourg to Champigny he had served through the campaign, crossing one battlefield after another, like a storm-bird, with his iron snappers and his *derbouka* (Arabian drum); so full of life he was, he seemed to be in so many places at once, that no bullet knew where to take him. But when winter came, the little bronzed African, glowing under the fire of grapeshot, could not endure those nights at the outposts, and the hours of immobility in the snow. One January morning he was picked up on the bank of the Marne, writhing with cold, his feet frozen. For a long time he remained in a hospital. It was there I saw him for the first time.

Sad, dumbly patient as a sick dog, the turco gazed about him with wide-open, gentle eyes. When some one spoke to him he smiled and showed his teeth. This was the only reply he could make, for our language was unknown to him, and he could scarcely even speak the *Sabir*, that Algerian

[1] Native African regiment.

patois composed of Provençal, Italian, Arabian, — made of that strange medley of words which time has gathered like sea-shells along many a Latin shore.

To divert himself, Kadour had only his *derbouka*. From time to time, when his weariness was too much for him, the drum was brought to his bedside and he was permitted to play upon it, but not too loudly, for fear of disturbing the other patients. Then his poor dark face, so lifeless and dull in the yellow daylight and amid the dismal wintry surroundings of the street, would grow animated again, covered with grimaces, as he followed the rhythm of each movement. Presently he would beat the charge, and his gleaming white teeth would show more and more, and he would smile ferociously; sometimes his eyes moistened as he beat a Mussulman morning-serenade, his nostrils would quiver, and breathing the foul air of the hospital, in the midst of phials and compresses, he saw once again the groves of Blidah, laden with oranges, the little Moriscas coming from the bath, enveloped in white and perfumed with vervain.

Thus two months passed. During that time much had occurred in Paris, but Kadour had not the slightest suspicion of all this. He heard the troops passing beneath his windows, weary and unarmed, the guns paraded, rolled about from morning till night, the tocsin, the cannonade. Of all this he understood nothing except that war had not ended, and that as soon as his limbs were healed he too would be able to fight again. At length,

one day he set out, his drum upon his back, in quest of his company, and he had not long to search. A group of Communists passing by led him to the Place. After a lengthy examination, as nothing could be gotten out of him except frequent repetitions of "*Bono bezef, machache bono,*" the general of the day finally presented him with ten francs and an omnibus-horse, and attached the turco to his own staff.

In the various staffs during the Commune, there was a little of everything, red blouses, Polish jackets, Hungarian jerkins, sailors' coats, gold, velvet, embroidery, and spangles. With his blue coat embroidered in yellow, his turban, and his *derbouka*, the turco added the finishing touch to the masquerade. Overjoyed to find himself in such fine company, intoxicated with the sunshine, the cannonading, and the turmoil of the streets, this confusion of arms and of uniforms, persuaded moreover that it was the war against Prussia that was being prosecuted with such inexpressible license and vigor, this deserter, who did not even know he had deserted, mingled naïvely in that great Bacchanal of Paris, and was the celebrity of the hour. Wherever he went, the Commune hailed him and feasted him. It felt such pride in possessing him that it exhibited, placarded, bore him about, as though he were a cockade. Twenty times a day the Place sent him to La Guerre, La Guerre despatched him to the Hôtel de Ville. For it had been so often observed that their sailors were no sailors at all, their artillery make-believe!

This at least was the real thing, a genuine turco. To be convinced of the fact, one need only look at the lively phiz of the young ape, and the savage strength of that little body rushing from place to place on his huge horse, pirouetting, capering about as if performing a fantasia.

One thing, however, was lacking to complete the happiness of Kadour. He longed to fight, to smell powder. Unfortunately, under the Commune, as before under the Empire, the staff saw little of that. Except during the time when he was parading, or busy upon errands, the poor turco passed his time on the Place Vendôme, or in the courtyards outside the war department, or in the midst of disorderly camps full of barrels of brandy always on tap, and tubs of bacon which had been smashed open, eating and drinking bouts following close upon the famine of the siege. Too true a Mussulman to take part in these orgies, Kadour held himself aloof, remained tranquil and sober, performing his ablutions in a corner, making his couscous with a handful of semolina, and after drumming a little upon his *derbouka*, would roll himself up in his burnous, and fall asleep upon a stone step, by the light of some bivouac fire.

One morning in the month of May, the turco was awakened by a terrific fusillade. At the war department all was commotion, men were running, fleeing. Mechanically he did as the others were doing, jumped upon his horse and followed the staff. The streets were full of terrified buglers, whole battalions were in utter confusion. Pave-

ments had been torn up to form barricades. Evidently something extraordinary was going on. As one approached the quay the fusillade was more distinct, the tumult greater. On the bridge of La Concorde, Kadour lost sight of the staff. A little farther on, his horse was taken from him. It was for an officer whose képi boasted eight stripes. He was in haste to witness what was happening at the Hôtel de Ville. Furious at losing his horse, the turco proceeded to run towards the thick of the fray. Rushing on, he loaded his chassepot as he went, muttering between his clenched teeth, "*Machache bono, Brissien;*" for all this tumult meant to him that the Prussians were entering Paris. Already the bullets had begun to whistle about the Obelisk and in the leafage of the Tuileries. At the barricade of the Rue de Rivoli the avengers of Flourens called out, "Hallo there! turco, turco!" There were not more than a dozen of them, but Kadour was worth an entire army.

Standing upon a barricade, gaudy and proud as a flag itself, leaping, crying, he fought amid a shower of grapeshot. The cloud of smoke rising from the earth lifted for a moment between two cannonades, and he could see red trousers massed about in the Champs Élysées. Then all became confused again. He thought he was mistaken, and let the powder speak once more in choicest accents.

Suddenly the barricade was silent. The last of the artillery had fled, despatching its final volley.

But the turco never budged. In his hiding-place, ready to spring, he adjusted his bayonet firmly, and waited for the pointed helmets. But what was this he saw? The line advancing! He heard the heavy tramp of the soldiers marching at quick pace, and above that the voices of officers exclaiming:

"Surrender!"

For a moment the turco was stupefied; then he advanced, his gun held aloft.

"*Bono, bono, Francèse!*"

Vaguely to his savage brain had come the idea that this was the army of deliverance, Faidherbe, or Chanzy, for which the Parisians had waited so long. How delighted he was! how he laughed, showing all his white teeth! In an instant the barricade was crowded. Men surround him, push him about.

"Let us see your gun."

It was still warm.

"Let us see your hands."

They were black with powder. The turco displayed them proudly, and still with that fine expansive smile of his. Then they shoved him against a wall, and — bang!

He died without once suspecting what it all meant.

THE CONCERT OF COMPANY EIGHT.

ALL the battalions of the Marais, and of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine were encamped that night in the barracks, along the Avenue Daumesnil. For three days the army of Ducrot had been fighting upon the heights of Champigny, and the rest of us had been prevailed upon to believe that we formed the reserve.

Nothing could have been more dismal than this encampment upon the *boulevard extérieur*, surrounded by factory-chimneys, closed stations, and deserted lumber-yards, lighted only by a few wine-sellers' shops. Nothing more glacial, more sordid, could be pictured than these long rows of wooden barracks, erected upon a ground dried and hardened by the cold of December; the frames of their windows were badly joined, the doors were always open, and the smoky lamps dimmed with the fog, like lanterns in the open air. It was impossible to read, to sleep, to remain seated. It was necessary to invent street urchins' games, merely to keep warm; men were seen beating their feet together, and running around the barracks. Such absurd inaction, so close to the field of battle, was as ignominious as it was enervating, especially on that night. Although the cannonade

had ceased, all felt that something terrible was about to happen above, and from time to time, when the electric search-lights of the forts flashed upon that side of Paris in their circular movement, silent troops could be seen massed along the edge of the pavements, and others ascending the avenue in sombre masses, apparently crouching close to the ground, and looking like pygmies, beside the high columns of the Place du Trône.

I was standing, almost frozen, hid in the darkness which wrapped those great boulevards, when some one said to me, —

"Come and see Company Eight. It seems they are having a concert!"

I went. Each of our companies had its own barrack. That of Company Eight was much better lighted than the others, and crammed with people. Candles fastened to the end of bayonets were flaming, clouded with black smoke. They shone in full upon these vulgar mechanics' faces, brutalized by drunkenness, cold, fatigue, and that wretched sleep taken while standing, — sleep which makes pale, sallow faces. In a corner, her mouth wide open, the cantinière was dozing curled up upon a bench, before her small table loaded with empty bottles and dirty glasses.

Some one was singing. As their turns came, *Messieurs les amateurs* mounted a stage improvised in the back of the room, and there they attitudinized, declaimed; draped in their blankets, they recalled melodramatic memories. I listened again to those robustious, ear-splitting voices, such as one

hears resounding from the extremity of some *passage*, or from those working-men's quarters, filled with clamorous children, noisy workshops, and bird-cages. Such a voice is charming to hear when it mingles with the music of tools, with an accompaniment of plane or hammer. But there upon that stage the sound was as absurd as it was painful.

First of all, we had the pensive working-man, a mechanic with a long beard, droning the woes of the proletary. "*Pauvro prolétair-o-o-o*" issued from deep down in his throat, in a song in which the Holy International has located its angers.

Then another came on, half asleep; he sang to us the famous song of the *Canaille*, but to an air so wearisome, slow, and doleful that one might have mistaken it for a lullaby, — "*C'est la canaille, — eh bien ! j'en suis ;*" and while he was chanting, we could hear the snoring of those who had sought corners determined to sleep, and with a grunt turned about trying to avoid the light.

Suddenly a white flash passed between the boards, and caused the red flame of the candles to pale. At the same time a heavy sound shook the barrack, followed by other sounds, heavier and farther away, which rumbled among the hills of Champigny, and then grew fitful and faint. The battle was beginning again. But *Messieurs les amateurs* scoffed at the very idea of a battle.

The stage itself and those four candles had stirred in all these people the indescribable instincts of the low comedian. It was curious to see how each lay

in wait for the last couplet of a predecessor, ready to snatch the ballad from his lips. They felt the cold no longer. Those who were upon the stage, those who descended it, and those who were awaiting their turn, a ballad at their tongue's end, all were perspiring, red in the face, their eyes kindled. Vanity kept them warm.

There were local celebrities present, among them an upholsterer-poet, who asked permission to sing a little song of his own composition, entitled the Egoist, with a refrain, *Chacun pour soi*.[1] And as he had an impediment in his speech, he could only say, "*egoift*," and "*facun pour foi*." It was a satire upon the big-bellied bourgeois, who would rather sit by his own fireside than go to the outposts. I can still seem to see the fine head of this fabulist, who, with his képi askew, his chin-piece strapped about his chin, emphasized every word of his chansonnette, hurling maliciously at us that refrain, —

"*Facun pour foi — facun pour foi.*"

During this time cannon were making music too, mingling that profound bass with the roulades of the *mitrailleuses*. They told of the wounded dying of cold in the snow, they spoke of the agony upon the roadsides amid pools of frozen blood, they told of blinding shells, of shadowy death, stealing through the night on every hand. But the concert of Company Eight continued.

And now obscene songs began. An old *rigolo* with bloodshot eyes and red nose frisked about upon the stage, followed by a mad stamping of

[1] Each for himself.

feet, cries of "Again!" and bravos. The broad grin which greets obscenities permitted among men spread over all these faces. Suddenly the cantinière awoke, and hemmed in by the crowd, devoured by all those eyes, contorted her features into the semblance of a smile, while the old man shouted in his husky voice, "*Le bon Dieu, saoûl comme un* —."

I could stand it no longer. I left. My turn to be on duty was coming. So much the worse. I needed room, and air. I walked straight ahead, but slowly, towards the Seine. The river was dark, the quay deserted. Paris, wrapped in gloom, deprived of gas, was slumbering, encircled with fires. Everywhere the flash of the cannon, and from place to place, on the heights, the ruddy light of incendiary fires. Quite near to me, I heard low hurried voices, sounding quite distinctly through the cold air. They panted for breath, they cheered each other on.

"Ho! heave there —"

Suddenly the voices stopped, as if suspended because of some arduous and mighty labor which requires all one's strength. As I approached the edge of the quay, I was able to distinguish in that vague light, rising from the still darker waters, a gunboat which had been stopped at the Bercy bridge, and was trying to ascend the current. The lanterns, which shook with every movement of the water, the grating of the cables, which sailors were hauling, indicated the falls, the recoils, all the shocks of that struggle against the malevolence of the river and the night. Valiant little boat! how

impatient all these delays made her. She churned the water furiously with her wheels, making it splash and bubble where she stood. At last a supreme effort pushed her forward. "Courage, boys!" And when she had passed, and was advancing directly onward through the fog towards the battle which had summoned her, there rose a mighty cry of "Vive la France!" and echoed under the bridge.

Ah! that concert of Company Eight, how far away it seemed!

THE BATTLE OF PÈRE-LACHAISE.

THE guard began to smile.

"A battle here? — but there never was one. It was merely an invention of the newspapers. Listen, and I will tell you all that really happened. On the evening of the twenty-second, which was a Sunday, we saw thirty of the artillery of the Commune approaching, with a battery of two-inch guns, and mitrailleuse of the newest pattern. They stationed themselves on the highest ground of the cemetery, and as I was on guard in that especial section, I received them myself. Their mitrailleuse was at this part of the walk, near my sentry-box, their cannon a little lower, upon this terreplein. On their arrival, they compelled me to open several chapels. I thought they were going to smash everything to pieces and pillage in general. But arranging them in good order, and placing himself in their midst, their chief delivered this little discourse for their benefit: 'If one blackguard of you all touches anything, I will blow off his jaw. Break ranks.' He was an old white-haired fellow, with medals received for his services in Italy and the Crimea; his manner said he would permit no trifling. His men understood that he meant what he said, and I will do them the justice to say that

they did not take a single thing from one of the tombs, not even the crucifix of the Duc de Morny, which alone is worth two thousand francs.

"Nevertheless, they were a villanous rabble, these artillerymen of the Commune. The gunners of the occasion thought of nothing except how to spend their three francs and a half of extra pay. You should have seen the life they led in that cemetery! They piled in together to sleep in the vaults. They occupied the Morny tomb and the Favronne, that beautiful tomb where the Emperor's nurse is interred. They cooled their wine in the Champeaux tomb, where there is a fountain. They brought in women, and all night long they drank and made merry. Ah! I can assure you that our dead must have heard curious things.

"All the same, in spite of their want of skill those bandits did not a little harm to Paris. Their position was admirable. From time to time they would receive orders, —

"'Fire upon the Louvre!' 'Fire upon the Palais-Royal!'

"Then their old leader would direct the guns, and shells filled with petroleum descended upon the city at random. What was going on elsewhere below, none of us could tell. We heard the fusillade coming nearer and nearer, but the Communists were not in the least disturbed about that. With the battery-fires of Chaumont, Montmartre, and Père-Lachaise, it did not seem possible to them that the Versailles forces could advance. But that which sobered them a little was the first shell

which a naval regiment sent our way on arriving upon the hill at Montmartre.

"They had expected it so little! I myself was in their midst, leaning against the Morny monument, and smoking my pipe. Seeing the bombs coming, I had no more than time enough to throw myself upon the ground. At first our gunners believed it was a false aim, or that some one of their colleagues was drunk, but I can tell you, at the end of five minutes another flash from Montmartre, and another plum of the same sort arrived, aimed straighter than the first. That very moment these jolly blades dropped their guns and their mitrailleuse, and took to their heels without ceremony. The cemetery was not large enough to hold them. They cried as they ran, 'We are betrayed! We are betrayed!'

"The old man alone remained there, exposed to all the fire, worked like the very devil in the midst of his battery, and wept with rage to see that his gunners had all fled.

"However, towards evening, when paytime arrived, a few of them returned. Look, Monsieur, upon my sentry-box; the names of those who returned to get their money that night are still here." The old man called their names, inscribing them as he did so.

"'*Sidaine, present; Choudeyras, present; Billot, Vollon*—'

"As you see, there are not more than four or five, but they had brought women with them. Ah! I shall never forget that evening they were paid.

Below, Paris was in flames, the Hôtel de Ville, the Arsenal, the public granaries. In Père-Lachaise one could see as plainly as by daylight. The Communists attempted to return to their guns, but there were not enough of them; and besides, Montmartre terrified them. So they retreated into a tomb, and began to drink and to sing with their wenches. The old man had seated himself between those two great stone figures that stand at the portal of the Favronne tomb, and his face was terrible to behold as he watched Paris burning. He looked as though he knew his last night had come.

"After that moment I scarcely know just what happened. I returned to my own quarters, — that little shanty which you see yonder, hidden among the branches. I was very tired, and I threw myself upon the bed, still dressed, keeping my lamp lighted as though it was a stormy night. Suddenly rough knocking was heard at the door. My wife went to open it, all in a tremble. We thought it was the Communists, but they were marines, — a commandant, ensigns, and a physician. They said to me, —

"'Get up; make us some coffee.'

"I got up; I made their coffee. A murmur was heard in the cemetery, an indistinct movement as if all the dead had awakened for the last Judgment-day. The officers drank very quickly, all standing; then they took me out with them.

"The cemetery was filled with soldiers and sailors. I was placed at the head of a squad, and we began

to search the cemetery, tomb after tomb. From time to time, when the soldiers saw something stirring in the foliage, they would fire a shot towards the end of a walk, and it would graze a bust, or pass through some grating. Here and there they discovered some poor wretch hiding in the corner of a chapel. They made short work of him. That was what was in store for my artillery-men. I found them all, men and women huddled about my sentry-box, the old fellow with the medals standing beside them. It was no pleasant sight in that cold gray dawn. *Brrr!* But what stirred me most was to see a long line of the national guards, who at this very moment were being led from the prison of La Roquette, where they had passed the night. They climbed the broad pathway slowly, like a funeral procession. Not a word, not a complaint could be heard. These unfortunates were utterly crushed, exhausted. There were some who were asleep while they marched, and even the thought that they were about to die did not seem to awaken them. They were forced to march on to the extremity of the cemetery, and the fusillade began. One hundred forty-seven of them there were. You can imagine whether it lasted very long. And that is what is called the battle of Père-Lachaise."

Here the worthy man, perceiving his sergeant, left me quite abruptly, and I remained there alone, looking at his sentry-box and those names written upon it, by the light of Paris in flames, — the names of those who had returned to receive their last pay.

I pictured that night in May, pierced with shells, red with blood and flames, that great, lonely cemetery illuminated like some city on a day of festival, the guns left in the middle of the paths around the open vaults, — that orgy in the tombs, while near-by, surrounded by innumerable domes, columns, and stone images, which seemed alive in the light of those leaping flames, was that bust with the broad forehead, and the large eyes, — the bust of Balzac regarding the scene.

THE LITTLE PÂTÉS.

I.

THAT Sunday morning, the pastry-cook Sureau, of the Rue Turenne called his apprentice and said to him,—

"Here are Monsieur Bonnicar's little pâtés. Carry them to him, and return at once, for they say the army from Versailles has entered Paris."

The boy, who understood nothing of politics, put the pâtés, still warm, into his tart-dish, the tart-dish in a white napkin, and balancing pâtés, dish, and all upon his cap, set out on a run for Île Saint-Louis, where Monsieur Bonnicar resided. The morning was glorious, sunshine everywhere,—that warm May sunshine that fills the fruit shops with bunches of lilacs and clusters of cherries.

In spite of the distant fusillade and the bugle calls at street-corners, all that venerable quarter of the Marais preserved its peaceful physiognomy. There was a suggestion of Sabbath in the air; voices of children were heard in the courtyards, tall girls were playing shuttlecock in front of their doors, and that little white outline trotting along the deserted street, a delicious perfume of hot pâté accompanying him, succeeded in imparting to this

morning of battle, a certain naïve and Sunday aspect. All the animation of the quarter seemed to be there in the Rue de Rivoli. Cannons were dragged about, men were working upon the barricades; at every step one came across groups of the national guards, very much busied. But the pastry-cook's boy did not lose his head. These youngsters are so accustomed to making their way through a crowd, so used to the hubbub of the street! It is on feast-days, when all is noise and bustle, on New Year's Days and Shrove Sundays, that they are kept busiest, running about; revolutions are scarcely a surprise to them.

It was really delightful to see that little white cap insinuating its way through képis and bayonets, avoiding collisions, keeping that tart-dish nicely balanced, sometimes hastening, sometimes compelled to move slowly, when one could plainly see it wished to rush on. What did it care about the battle? The chief thing was to reach the Bonnicars' just as twelve struck, and to receive as quickly as possible the little *pourboire* which was waiting there upon a shelf in the anteroom.

Suddenly the crowd began to push and shove terribly, and the pupils of the Republic passed by at a run, singing. They were from twelve to fifteen years of age, decorated with chassepots, red girdles, and big boots; no Mardi Gras masqueraders, running along a muddy boulevard, wearing paper caps and carrying a grotesque pink shred of a parasol, could have been prouder than they to be disguised as soldiers. And this time the jost-

ling was so great that the pastry-cook's boy found it difficult to maintain his equilibrium; but his tart-dish and he had slid along the ice so many times, had taken part in so many games of hop-scotch upon the sidewalk, that the little pâtés had ceased to feel any fear.

Unfortunately, all that excitement, those songs and red girdles, and his admiring curiosity, suddenly inspired the pastry-cook's boy with a desire to go farther in such fine company, and passing beyond the Hôtel de Ville and the bridges of Île Saint-Louis without even perceiving them, he himself borne onward, following that dust-stained, wind-swept, mad procession — how far he was carried, I do not know.

II.

FOR at least twenty-five years it had been the custom of the Bonnicars to partake of those little pâtés every Sunday. Exactly on the stroke of twelve, when the entire family — large and small — were assembled in the dining-room, a lively, cheery ring of the bell was heard, and every one would say, —

"Ah! it is the pastry-cook!"

Then there would be great bustling, the movement of chairs would be heard, the rustling of Sunday frocks; the children distributed themselves joyously about the table, already set, and all these happy bourgeois would seat themselves

around those little pâtés symmetrically piled upon a silver warming-dish.

But upon that Sunday the bell remained mute. Scandalized, Monsieur Bonnicar looked at his clock, a venerable affair surmounted by a stuffed heron, a clock which never in its lifetime had been either a moment fast or a moment slow. The children stared through the windows, watching the corner of the street where the pastry-man's apprentice usually appeared first. Conversation languished, and that hunger which noon with its twelve strokes of the clock usually awakes overcame every one, making the dining-room seem very large, very dreary, in spite of the antique silver gleaming upon the damask cloth, and the napkins twisted in the form of tiny horns, white and stiff.

Several times already the old servant had come to whisper in her master's ear that the roast was burnt, the little green peas overcooked; but Monsieur Bonnicar was determined not to sit down at table without the little pâtés, and furiously angry with Sureau, he determined to go and learn for himself what this unheard-of delay might mean. As he went out, brandishing his cane and very angry, his neighbors gave him warning, —

"Look out, Monsieur Bonnicar! People say the Versaillais have entered Paris."

But he would hear nothing, not even the sounds of the fusillade, which were coming from Neuilly across the water, not even the alarm-gun of the Hôtel de Ville, which shook every window of the quarter.

"Oh! that Sureau! that Sureau!"

And in the excitement and speed of his walk he talked to himself, imagining that he was already in the middle of the shop, hammering the floor with his cane, making the glass of the showcase and the plates of plum-cake tremble. The barricade of Pont Louis-Philippe interrupted his anger for a moment. Some Communists with ferocious mien were there, sprawling in the sunlight upon the pavement, whose stones had been removed.

"Where are you going, citizen?"

The citizen explained, but the story of the little pâtés appeared to arouse suspicion, especially as M. Bonnicar wore his fine Sunday-coat, his gold spectacles, and had every appearance of being an old *réactionnaire*.

"He is a spy," said the *fédérés*, "he must be sent to Rigault."

Whereupon, very willingly, four men who were not at all sorry to leave the barricade drove the exasperated and wretched man before them with the butt-ends of their guns. I do not know how they managed it, but half an hour later they were all captured by the Line, and were sent to join a long file of prisoners who were about to be marched to Versailles. M. Bonnicar protested more and more, raised his cane, and related his tale for the hundredth time. Unfortunately, that story concerning the little pâtés appeared so absurd, so incredible, in the midst of the great upheaval of the city, that the officers merely smiled at it.

"That 's a fine story, old fellow. You shall explain all about it at Versailles."

And through the Champs Élysées, white with the smoke of repeated firings, the column moved on between two lines of chasseurs.

III.

THE prisoners marched five abreast, their ranks closed and compact. To prevent the procession from scattering, they were compelled to walk arm in arm, and as the long column passed on, that human herd trampling the dust of the road, the sound resembled that of a heavy rain-storm.

The unhappy Bonnicar believed he must be dreaming. Panting, perspiring, dizzy with fear and fatigue, he dragged himself on at the end of the column, between two old hags who reeked of petroleum and brandy, and those about him who heard those words, "pastry-cook," "little pâtés," repeated again and again, amid imprecations, thought he had gone mad.

And indeed the poor man had lost his head. As they ascended the road, descended it again, when the ranks of the procession would open a little, did he not fancy he saw yonder, in the dust which filled the open space, the white jacket and the cap of that boy of Sureau's? And ten times at least M. Bonnicar seemed to see him upon the road. That tiny white flash passed before his eyes, as if to

mock him, then it would disappear again in the midst of a surging multitude of figures, some clad in uniforms, some in blouses, and others in tatters. At last, just at sunset, they arrived at Versailles, and when the crowd saw that old, spectacled bourgeois, haggard, untidy, and covered with dust, with one accord they discovered that he was a scoundrel of the deepest dye. They said, "It is Félix Pyat — no! it is Delescluze."

The chasseurs of the escort had some difficulty in conducting him safe and sound to the courtyard of the *Orangerie*. There for the first time that wretched procession was allowed to scatter, to stretch their limbs on the ground, and to regain their breath. Some were half asleep, others were swearing, coughing, weeping. But Bonnicar neither wept nor slept. Seated upon a stone stairway, his head buried in his hands, three fourths of him dead from hunger, shame, and fatigue, his mind reverted to all the incidents of that unhappy day, his departure from home, his companions at table anxiously waiting, the table standing until evening, expecting him still, and then the humiliation, the injuries, those gun-butts directed at him, and all this merely on account of an unpunctual pastry-cook!

"Monsieur Bonnicar! here are your little pâtés!" a voice near-by suddenly exclaimed; and raising his head, the worthy man was much surprised when he saw that pastry-cook's boy of Sureau's — who, it seems, had been captured along with the pupils of the Republic — uncover and present to

him the tart-dish concealed behind his white apron! And thus it happened that, in spite of the *émeute* and imprisonment, upon this Sabbath as on every other, Monsieur Bonnicar ate his little pâtés.

ABOARD: A MONOLOGUE.

TWO hours ago every light was extinguished, every porthole closed. On the lower gun-deck, which serves us for sleeping-room, all is dark, oppressive, and stifling. I hear my comrades turning about in their hammocks, dreaming aloud, and groaning in their sleep. These days spent in utter idleness, where only the brain works until it is weary, lead to restless nights of fevered slumber, from which one starts again and again. And even that slumber will not come to me. I cannot sleep; my thoughts will not let me.

On the deck above the rain is falling. The wind is high. From time to time, when the watch changes, a bell at the bow of the ship rings through the fog. Every time I hear it I am reminded of Paris, and the six o'clock bell ringing in the factories all about us. There are plenty of factories in our neighborhood. I see our little lodging, the children returning from school, the mother seated in the back of the workshop, just finishing something which she holds up to the window, availing herself of the last bit of the waning daylight, until she comes to the end of her thread. Alas! what is to become now of everything there?

Perhaps it would have been better for me to take them with me, since I had permission. But then,

what could one expect? They would be so far away from home. I feared the effect of the voyage and change of climate upon the children. And then we would have had to sell our stock of trimmings, our little property brought together with such effort, collected piece by piece for ten years. And my boys could not have gone to school any longer. And their mother would have been compelled to live among a parcel of trulls! No, indeed! I would rather endure it all alone. And yet when I climb to the deck above, and see all those families seated there, as if they were quite at home, the mothers sewing, the children clinging to their skirts, I could almost cry every time.

The wind increases, the sea swells. The frigate sails on, pitching sidewise; the masts creak, the sails crack. We must be going very quickly. So much the better. I am almost anxious now to reach that Île des Pins, the mere thought of which terrified me so when I was sentenced. It will be the end of my journey, it will be a resting-place. And I am so weary. There are moments when all that I have seen during the past twenty months rises before my eyes again, and makes my head swim. The Prussian siege, the ramparts, the drill, the clubs, the civil interments, immortelles in one's button-hole, the addresses at the foot of the Column, the feasts of the Commune at the Hôtel de Ville, the reviews of Cluseret, those sorties, the battle, the station at Clamart, and all those low walls where we knelt to fire upon the gendarmes; and then Satory, the prison-hulks, the police, the

transportations from one ship to another, the goings and comings which made one ten times a prisoner in exchanging prisons; and lastly the chamber of the Council of War, with all those officers in full dress, seated at the rear, in the shape of a horseshoe, and then those prisoners' barges, the embarkation, the farewell, — all these are jumbled, confused in that bewildered state which comes after tossing about a few days at sea.

Oh!

Hardship, dust, and what else besides I do not know, have covered my face, like a mask. It seems to me that I have not washed for ten years.

Ah, yes! it will seem good indeed to set foot somewhere, to halt at last. They say that when I get there I shall have a bit of ground, tools, a little house. A little house! yes, we dreamed of such a one, my wife and I, on the hill at Saint Mandé, a little, low house, with a garden spread in front like an open drawer, full of vegetables and flowers. There on Sundays, from morning till night, we would have taken our airing, sunned ourselves for the whole week to come, and when the children were grown, and each had learned his trade, there we would have retired to enjoy a peaceful old age. Ah, poor fool, see where you are now! on the retired list to be sure, and you will have your house in the country!

Oh, misery! when I think that politics was the cause of it all! And I always mistrusted their infernal politics, was always afraid of it. At first I was not rich, and with my stock to pay for I had

not much time for reading the papers, or listening to all the fine speakers at different meetings. But the cursed siege came, and the national guard, — nothing to do but to brawl and to drink. Of course I must go to their clubs with the others, and all their fine words ended by turning my head, — "The working-man's rights! The welfare of the People!"

When the Commune came, I believed that the Golden Age for the poor had arrived. Not long after, I was made a captain, and as all the staff must have new clothes, all that lace, those frogs and aiguillettes gave plenty of work to our establishment. Later, when I saw how things were going, I wanted to get out of it all, but I was afraid every one would think me a coward.

What are they doing now overhead? I hear a rumbling sound — a voice through the speaking-tubes. Jack-boots are tramping the slippery deck. These sailors, what hard lives they lead! There is the quartermaster's whistle, rousing them from their sleep. They climb upon the deck, not yet awake, and moist with sweat. They must hurry to and fro, in the dark, in the cold. The boards are slippery, the riggings are frozen, and cause the hands that cling to them to smart. And while they hang there upon the yard-arms, between the sky and the sea, hauling those great stiffened sails, a sudden squall seizes them, sweeps them off, and scatters them upon the high sea, as though they were merely a flock of sea-gulls. Ah! a sailor's life is somewhat rougher than that of a Paris work-

ing-man, and not as well paid. And yet these fellows do not complain, do not rebel at it. They look perfectly content, their clear eyes are resolute enough; and how they respect those who command them! It is plain to see that they have not frequented our clubs!

This is a storm indeed! The frigate tosses horribly, — leaping and creaking in all her timbers. Floods of water pour upon the deck, with a roar like thunder; after that, for five minutes at least, tiny gutters overflow on every side. There is a sudden stir about me. Some are sea-sick, others are afraid.

This enforced immobility in the hour of danger is the worst form of imprisonment. And to think that while we are huddled here like so many cattle, groping and tossed about in this sinister tumult which surrounds us, so many of those charming sons of the Commune with gilt tassels and red plastrons — all those play soldiers, cowards who drove us to the front — are placidly enjoying themselves in their cafés, in theatres at London, Geneva, and so near France. When I think of that it makes me furious.

Upon the gun-deck, all are awake now. They call from hammock to hammock, and as all of them are Parisians, they begin to joke and laugh, and chaff each other. I pretend I am still asleep so that they may let me alone. How horrible, what torture it is never to have a moment to one's self, to live in such a hive as this, to be obliged to grow angry when these others are, to talk as

they talk, make believe one hates what he does not, — all this that he need not be taken for a spy. And that endless, endless jesting of theirs! Good Lord! what a sea! Surely the gale is hollowing out great black chasms, into which the frigate plunges as it is whirled onward. Yes, surely, it was best that I did not take them with me. It is good to think in this hour that they are at home, safely sheltered in our little chamber. Deep in the gloom of the gun-deck, I fancy I catch the gleam from a lamp; it seems to fall upon the foreheads of the children, fast asleep; and their mother, leaning over them, muses, and works the while.

THE FAIRIES OF FRANCE.

A FANTASTIC TALE.

"THE prisoner may rise," said the presiding judge.

There was a sudden stir upon that hideous bench, where were seated the women accused of trying to set fire to the city with petroleum. A misshapen, shivering creature rose and leaned against the bar. She was a bundle of rags and tatters, patches, strings, old flowers and feathers, and above them all a poor faded face, brown and shrivelled and wrinkled; two tiny black eyes peered out from the wrinkles, twisting round and round like some lizard in the crevice of an old wall.

"What is your name?" she was asked.

"Melusine —"

"What did you say?"

She repeated very gravely, "Melusine."

Under the heavy moustache of a colonel of dragoons quivered a smile which the president concealed, and he continued without moving a muscle:

"Your age?"

"I have forgotten."

"Your calling?"

"I am a fairy!"

For one sudden moment the court, the counsel, even the government commissary himself, all burst out laughing; but that did not disturb her, and her clear, shrill, tremulous voice rose through the hall, and lingered like a voice heard in a dream. She continued, —

"Ah! the Fairies of France, where are they now? They are dead, all of them, my good sirs. I am the last. After me, none will remain. And in truth it is a great pity, for France was more beautiful when she had still her fairies. We were the poesy of the land, its faith, its candor, and its youth. All our favorite haunts, the hidden recesses of parks, overgrown with brambles, the stones about each fountain, the turrets of ancient castles, the mists shrouding each pool, and the great fens, all received from our presence a nameless magic gift which ennobled them. Through the luminous mist of legend and fantasy might be caught glimpses of us everywhere, trailing our skirts in a ray of the moon, flitting across the meadows, touching the tip of each grass-blade. The country-folk loved us, reverenced us. And fancy bred of innocence adored us, and even feared us a little, when she caught sight of our wands, our distaffs, our foreheads crowned with pearls. And so our springs remained unsullied. Even the plough would pause at the haunts we guarded, and as we, the oldest people in the world, made all respect old age from one end of France to the other, lofty forests were allowed to flourish, and stones crumbled into dust undisturbed.

"But the age has progressed. The days of railroads have come. Men hollowed out tunnels, filled up our ponds, and hewed down so many trees that we no longer knew where we might rest. And by degrees the country-folk themselves ceased to believe in us. One evening, when we knocked at his shutters, Robin said, "It is only the wind," and fell asleep again. Women came to dabble their washing in our pools. From that day all was ended for us. As we lived only in the popular faith, losing that we lost all. The virtue of our wands has vanished. Puissant queens we once were; now we appear to be old, old women merely, wrinkled, malicious, as are all forgotten fairies. Moreover, we must win our bread, and with hands that never yet learned to do aught. For a time we were to be seen in the forests, dragging loads of dead wood, or gleaning by the roadside. But the foresters were hard with us, the country-folk threw stones at us. Then, like the poor, when they can no longer earn their living in the country, we departed to seek work in the great cities.

"Some went into the mills, others sold apples at the bridges during the winter, stood at the church-doors selling beads. We pushed carts of oranges along, we offered to passers-by at a sou apiece bouquets that nobody wanted. The children mocked at us because of our hanging chins, the police made us move on, and omnibuses knocked us down. Then came sickness, privations, the hospital-sheet over us. That is how France has left her fairies to die. She has been punished for that.

"Yes, yes, smile, my good people. But, all the

same, we have seen what a country without fairies may become. We have seen our well-fed, sneering peasants open their chests for the Prussians, and direct them along our roads. You see, Robin no longer believes in sorcery, but he has also lost his faith in his country. Ah! if we had been there, we fairies, of all those Germans who entered France, not one should have returned alive. Our *draks*, our will-o'-the-wisps would have led them into the quagmires. Into every pure spring named for us we would have poured an enchanted potion that would have made them go mad. And at our meetings by moonlight, with a single magic word we would have confused the roads and rivers for them, entangled so thick with brambles and briars those hiding-places in the woods where they were always squatting that even the little cat-eyes of Monsieur de Moltke could not have told him where he was. Had we been there, the peasants too would have marched to fight. From the gorgeous flowers about our pools, we would have extracted balms to heal many a wound; gossamer-threads we would have used for lint, and on the battle-field the soldier would have beheld the fairy of his own canton hovering above his half-closed eyelids, to show him some glade, some hidden byway that might remind him of his native land. So we should have waged a national war, a holy war. But alas! in a country whose faith is dead, a land that no longer believes in fairies, such a war is impossible."

Here the thin, shrill voice paused for a moment and the judge interposed a word, —

"All this does not tell us what you were doing with the petroleum that was found upon you when the soldiers arrested you."

"I was setting fire to Paris, my good sir," answered the old "fairy," calmly enough. "I was setting fire to Paris — because I hate it, because its laugh spares nothing, because it is Paris that slew us, Paris that has sent its savants to analyze our beautiful, miraculous springs, and to say exactly how much iron and sulphur they contain, Paris that has mocked at us from its theatres. Of our enchantments it has made mere stage tricks, our miracles it has perverted into vulgar jests. So many vile beings have masqueraded in our rose-tinted robes, sat in our winged chariots, with Bengal fires for moonlight, that no one can think of us now without a smile. Once little children knew us by name, loved us, feared us a little, but instead of the beautiful gilded books full of pictures, wherein they learned to know our history, Paris to-day places in their hands *Science adapted to children*, big, musty volumes which make their heads tired and fill their baby-eyes with a dull dust that effaces every image of our enchanted palaces and magic mirrors. Oh, yes! I should have been overjoyed to see it in flames — your Paris. It was I that filled the cans of the petroleum-women, I myself that led them to the best places, saying, 'Come, my children, burn everything, — burn! burn!'"

"Decidedly this old woman is mad," said the judge. "Lead her away."

PART II.

CAPRICES AND SOUVENIRS.

CAPRICES AND SOUVENIRS.

A BOOK-KEEPER.

"BR-R-R! how foggy it is!" said the good man, as he stepped into the street. He pulled up his collar quickly, drew his muffler over his chin, and with bent head, and hands buried in his back-pockets, he set out for his office, whistling as he went.

And foggy indeed it was. In the streets this fog is not so noticeable; in the heart of a great city it vanishes as quickly as the snow does. Roofs intercept it, walls absorb it, some of it finds a way into the houses every time the door is opened; it clings to the steps, making them slippery and the railings humid. The rolling of carriages, the coming and going of passers-by — those poor wayfarers of early morning, always in haste — cut the fog, scatter it, and carry some of it onward. It clings to the shabby, scant clothing of petty clerks on their way to work; it clings to the waterproofs of shop-girls, to their flimsy little veils, to the big oil-cloth boxes in which they carry their work. But on the still deserted quays, upon the bridges, the banks, the river, rests a heavy mist, opaque, immovable; through it the sun is rising

yonder, behind Notre-Dame, its light dimmed as that of a watch-lamp seen through a globe of ground glass.

In spite of the wind and the fog, the man of whom we have already spoken passes along the quays, never for a moment leaving them; he could have taken another road, but the river appeared to have some mysterious attraction for him. It afforded him a species of delight to walk along the parapets, graze those stone railings worn by the elbows of many a lounger. At that hour, in such weather, loungers were few. But here and there a woman carrying a bundle of linen rests against the parapet, or some poor devil, leaning upon his elbows, hangs over the water with an air of weariness. And the man as he passes on looks about, watching them curiously, and then casts a glance towards the water as if some hidden chain of thought linked these people with the river itself.

And the river was not a cheerful sight that morning. The fog rising between its waves seemed to make it heavier. The dark roofs rising above its banks, the reflection of all those irregular chimney-tops, leaning and cutting each other on the river's surface, made one think of some dismal factory located at the bottom of the Seine, and sending all its smoke aloft to Paris in fog. But our worthy man seems to find nothing sad in the sight. The moisture penetrates every portion of his body, he has not a dry thread of clothing, but he continues on his way whistling, a happy smile upon his lips. Long ago he became accustomed to the Seine

fogs. And then, he knows that when he reaches his destination he will find his pleasant fur-lined foot-warmer, a roaring stove awaiting him, and the warm little plate in which he makes his breakfast every morning. These are the pleasures of an employé, such are the only joys of these imprisoned and stunted beings whose whole lives are passed in one little corner.

"I must not forget to buy some apples," he says to himself again and again, and whistling he hurries on. You never saw any man go to his labor more gayly.

The quays, and still the quays; then comes a bridge, and now he has passed to the rear of Notre-Dame. At this point of the Island the fog is thicker than ever. It rises on three sides at once, partly obscures the high towers, gathers at the corner of the bridge, as if there were something there it would conceal. The man pauses. This is the place.

Not too plainly may be distinguished sinister and shadowy figures, squatting upon the sidewalk, who seem to await something. And as at the railings of hospitals and squares, here also may be seen flat baskets outspread with their rows of cakes, oranges, and apples. Oh! those beautiful apples,—so fresh, so rosy, with the mist upon them. He fills his pockets with them, smiling at the vendor, who sits shivering, her feet upon her foot-stove. Then he opens a door shrouded in fog, and crosses a little yard where a cart is standing harnessed.

"Anything for us?" he asks as he passes. The wagoner replies,—

"Yes, sir, and something pretty this time."

He enters his office quickly. How comfortable and warm it is within! In a corner the stove roars; his foot-warmer is in its place; his little arm-chair awaits him in the brightest part of the room, by the window; the fog curtains its panes, making a subdued, even light, and big books with green backs, stand in a methodical row upon their rack. A genuine notary's cabinet.

The man breathes freely. He is at home.

Before setting to work he opens a great closet, brings out his lustrine sleeves which he puts on carefully, draws forth a little, red earthen-ware plate and some lumps of sugar, which came from some café, and begins to peel his apples, gazing about him with a satisfied air. And surely it would have been impossible anywhere to find a cheerfuller, brighter office, or one more orderly in every arrangement. But there was one singular thing, and that was the sound of water which one could not help hearing on every side — water everywhere, enveloping you as though you were in the cabin of a ship. Below lay the Seine, roaring, dashing against the arches of the bridge, breaking in billows of foam at that point of the Île, always encumbered with planks and piles and wreckage. And even within and around the office there was the drip! drip! of water thrown in pitcherfuls, the plash of water washing heavily upon something within. Why, I know not, but the very sound of

that water made one shiver just to hear it. One felt that it fell upon a hard floor, upon great slabs, upon marble tables which made it still colder than before.

What, then, do they wash again and again in this strange house? What ineffaceable stain is here?

At moments, when the splashing ceases below, drops are heard falling one by one as after a thaw or a heavy rain. One might think that the fog gathered upon roofs and walls were melting from the heat of the stove, and trickling ceaselessly.

But the man takes no notice of it. He is completely absorbed in his apples, which begin to sing in the red earthen-ware plate, exhaling a delicate perfume of caramel; and that delightful song prevents his hearing the drip of the water, the sinister drip of the water.

"Whenever you choose, recorder," speaks a husky voice from a side-room. He glances at his apples, and leaves the room regretfully. Where is he going? Through the door which opens for a minute, comes a chilly and unwholesome breath, smelling of reeds and marshes, and there is seen what seems to be a glimpse of clothes drying upon a line, faded blouses, smocks, a calico robe hanging at full length by the sleeves, and dripping, dripping.

That part disposed of, he returns to his office, and places upon his table a few small articles soaked with water; and, chilled, he turns towards the stove to warm his hands, which are red with cold.

"Any one must be crazy to choose such weather

as this," he says with a shiver; "what ails them all, I wonder?"

And as he is warm again, and his sugar has begun to form little crystal drops around his plate, he sits down to eat his breakfast upon a corner of his desk. As he eats, he opens one of his registers, and turns its leaves complacently. The big book is so well kept! — ruled lines, entries in blue ink, minute reflections of gold powder, blotters at every page, care and order apparent everywhere. It seems that his business is thriving, for the worthy man's face wears a satisfied air, like that of an accountant after an annual stock-taking that has turned out well. And while he turns over the pages of his book with delight, the doors of the side-chamber open, the sound of many footsteps is heard upon the flagstones, and voices saying in a half-whisper, as if in church, —

"Oh! how young she is! What a pity!"

And they elbow and push forward, whispering still.

What does it matter to him that she is young? Tranquilly finishing his apples, he sets before him the articles he brought in a little while ago. A thimble, full of sand, a pocketbook with a single sou in it, a little pair of rusty scissors, so rusty that they will never be used again, oh! never again; the little book which registers her as working-girl — its leaves glued together; a tattered letter, almost effaced, of which may be deciphered a few words: "The child . . . no money . . . a month's nursing . . ."

The book-keeper shrugs his shoulders with an air that seems to say, —

"We have heard that before." Then he takes his pen, brushes away carefully the crumbs of bread which have fallen upon his ledger, makes a movement preparatory to placing his fingers in good position, and in his best hand writes the name he has just deciphered upon the mouldy book.

Félicie Rameau, burnisher: age, seventeen years.

"WITH THE THREE HUNDRED THOUSAND FRANCS WHICH GIRARDIN PROMISED ME!"

AFTER a two hours' walk in Paris, when you had left home with light tread, and gay-hearted, have you never returned out of sorts, depressed by a sadness for which you could ascribe no cause, an incomprehensible weariness? You ask yourself what ails you, but seek in vain for an answer to the question. Your walk had led you through pleasant paths; it was dry underfoot, and the sun shone brightly, and yet your heart is touched with a pain and sorrow that linger like the memory of some past grief.

For in this mighty Paris, with its multitude of people who feel themselves free and unobserved, it is impossible to take a step without jostling against some intrusive misery that bespatters the passer-by, leaving its ineffaceable mark. I am speaking not merely of those misfortunes with which we are familiar, in which we are interested, of those disappointments of some friend, which seem in some slight degree our disappointments also, which oppress our hearts with a pang almost of remorse when we encounter them suddenly; neither do I speak of the troubles of those for

whom we feel mere indifference, to whom we listen with one ear only, scarcely suspecting that we are distressed at all; I speak of those sorrows which are quite alien to our lives, of which we catch only a passing, momentary glimpse while rambling about through the crowded streets.

Fragments of dialogues are heard, interrupted by the noise of vehicles; some of these wayfarers are preoccupied, deaf, and dumb; they soliloquize loudly, with wild gestures; their eyes glitter feverishly, and their shoulders droop from weariness. Others there are whose pale faces are swollen with weeping, black-veiled mourners whose recent tears are scarcely dried. And then those trivial details which seem to elude notice! That figure whose well-worn coat, shiny from frequent brushings, shuns the bright daylight; another seated beneath a porch turning a barrel-organ that has lost its notes; a hunchback who wears about her neck a velvet ribbon, stiffly tied between her misshapen shoulders. You sight these unfortunates, strangers to you, merely for a moment, and forget them as you pass on, but they have brushed against you, you have felt some passing contact with their wretchedness, your very garments are impregnated with the weariness that follows in their footsteps, and at the day's end, you feel a restlessness, a sense of depression; for at some street-corner, at the threshold of some home, unconsciously you have touched the invisible thread that binds so closely the existence of all these wretched ones that the least shock to one is felt by all.

I was thinking of this the other morning, for it is especially during the morning that the misery of Paris may be seen at its worst. I saw, walking in front of me, a poor lean devil in a coat much too small for him, which seemed to make his long legs still longer, and to exaggerate tremendously all his gestures. He was walking very fast, bent almost double, swaying like a tree tossed by the wind. From time to time he would put his hand in one of his back pockets and break off a bit of a small roll concealed there, devouring it furtively, as if ashamed to eat in the street.

When I see masons seated upon the sidewalks, nibbling the heart of a fine fresh loaf, it gives me an appetite. I envy too, each humble clerk rushing back from the bake-shop to his work, pen behind his ear, and his mouth full, quite exhilarated by this meal in the open air. But this man wore the shamefaced air of one who knows what real hunger means, and it was pitiful to see this unfortunate afraid to eat more than the tiniest morsels of the bread he was crumbling within his pocket. I followed him for a moment, but suddenly, brusquely, as frequently happens with these dazed beings, the trend of his thought was changed, and turning around, he found himself face to face with me.

"Holloa, is it you?" I chanced to recognize him as an acquaintance, one of those fomenters of schemes that spring up in innumerable numbers from the very pavement of Paris, an inventor, a founder of impossible journals, which for a space

make no end of talk in print, and are advertised on every side. Three months ago he had disappeared in a formidable plunge. After a few days' bubbling of the waters where he fell, the surface of the tide was as smooth as ever, the waters closed again, and no one thought further about him. He was disturbed at seeing me, and in order to cut short all questioning, and doubtless also to divert attention from his sordid appearance, his half-pennyworth of bread, he began to talk very rapidly, in a tone of assumed gayety. His affairs were progressing finely, finely! A little at a standstill just at present, but this would not be for long. At this very moment he was considering a magnificent undertaking, nothing less than a great industrial journal, illustrated! Much money in it, and a splendid contract, superb advertising! His face grew more and more animated as he talked. His figure straightened itself. By degrees, he began to assume a protecting tone, as though he fancied himself already seated at his editor's-desk. He even asked me to furnish some articles, adding in a triumphant voice, —

"And you know, it's an assured thing; I shall begin with the three hundred thousand francs that Girardin has promised me!"

Girardin!

That is the name forever upon the tongue of all these visionaries. When I hear it pronounced, I seem to see new quarters, huge buildings never completed, journals just fresh from print, with lists of subscribers and directors. How often I have

heard it said of some senseless project, "We must speak about that to Girardin!"

And in this poor devil's brain also had come the idea that he must mention his scheme to Girardin! All night long he had been preparing his plan, figuring upon it. Then he had started out, and as he went on, to his excited fancy it had all looked so fine that at the moment of our encounter it seemed absolutely impossible to him that Girardin could think of refusing that three hundred thousand francs. And in stating that they had been promised to him the poor wretch told no falsehood, for his words were merely the continuation of his dream.

While he was talking, we were jostled and pushed against a wall. We stood upon the sidewalk of one of those bustling streets leading to the Bourse and the Bank; it was filled with people rushing on distractedly and absorbed in their own affairs, anxious shop-keepers in haste to pay their notes, petty speculators, with coarse faces, hurling quotations in each other's ears as they passed by. And listening to all these fine projects in the midst of that crowd, in that quarter where speculation runs riot, where all these players of the game of chance impart their feverish haste to every one, I shuddered as one might to hear the tale of some shipwreck recited in mid-ocean. For I saw all that this man was telling me actually written upon the faces of those about us; all his catastrophes, all his radiant hopes could be read in their wild, dazed eyes. He left me as suddenly as he had accosted

me, and plunged headlong into that whirl of folly and illusions and lying hopes, all that which men of this sort refer to in a serious tone as "affairs."

At the end of five minutes I had forgotten him, but at night after I had returned home, when I had dispelled the memory of all the sad sights of the day in shaking the dust of the streets off my feet, I seemed to see again that wan, worried face of the man with his morsel of bread, seemed to see the gesture that emphasized those pompous words, "With the three hundred thousand francs which Girardin has promised me!"

ARTHUR.

SOME years ago I occupied a tiny box of a house in the Champs Élysées, in the Passage des Douze-Maisons. Picture to yourself an out-of-the-way corner of that faubourg, nestling in the midst of those great, aristocratic avenues, so cold, so tranquil, along which it seems that no one ever passes except in an equipage. Whether the caprice of their owner was some insane freak of avarice or a mania for old things, I do not know, but there in the midst of this beautiful quarter, he had allowed those waste spaces to remain, with little mouldy gardens, low houses crookedly built, the staircase on the outside, and wooden terraces covered with linen spread to dry, rabbit-cages here and there, lean cats, and famished tame crows. Here also had installed themselves mechanics, petty pensioners, some few artists — the latter always to be found where trees are left — and in addition to all this, there were two or three lodging-houses of sordid aspect, which looked as if begrimed with the poverty of generations. All around was the stir and splendor of the Champs Élysées, an incessant rumbling, the clatter of horses' hoofs, and the sound of *portes-cochères* opening heavily; barouches roll by, shaking the portals as they pass,

the muffled sound of pianos and the violins of Mabille Garden are heard; outlined against the horizon stand great, silent houses, with swelling fronts, their windows shaded with light, silken curtains, while behind the tall panes of spotless glass gleam golden candelabra and jardinières filled with rare flowers.

To enter that dark passage-way of the Douze-Maisons, standing in the midst of the beautiful scenery of the neighborhood, and lighted at one end by a single street-lamp, seemed like stepping behind the scenes in a theatre. The spangles that decorated all this luxury found a refuge there: liveried lace, the clown's tights, a vagabond world of circus-riders, English ostlers, two tiny postilions of the Hippodrome, with their twin ponies and advertising-placards; goat-carts, punchinellos, wafer-sellers, and a whole tribe of blind men returned at evening, loaded with camp-stools, accordions, and bowls. One of these blind men was married while I lived in the passage, and the event was the occasion of a concert which lasted all night long; a fantastic concert where clarionets, hautboys, hand-organs, and accordions mingled, while that procession paraded the various bridges of Paris, to the droning sound of their various instruments. But ordinarily the passage was very quiet. These nomads of the street never returned till dusk, and then they were tired enough. There was rarely a racket except on Saturday, when Arthur received his week's pay.

Arthur was my neighbor. A tiny wall, pro-

longed by a trellis, separated my *pavilion* from the lodging-house in which he dwelt with his wife, and so, in spite of myself, his life and mine came in contact for a time, and every Saturday I was compelled, without losing a single word of it all, to listen to the horrible drama so often enacted in the homes of mechanics of this sort, a drama so Parisian in its details. It always began the same way. The wife would prepare dinner, the children gathering about her. She talked to them in a gentle voice, and was very busy. Seven o'clock, eight o'clock, and no one came. As the hours passed her voice changed in tone, became nervous and tearful. The children grew hungry and sleepy, and began to whine. But the husband did not return. They ate without him. Then, the little brood in bed, the children asleep, she would appear upon the wooden balcony, and I could hear her whisper between her sobs, "Oh, the blackguard, the blackguard!"

Neighbors would find her there, and try to sympathize.

"Come, come, go to bed, Madame Arthur. You know he'll not be home to-night. It 's pay-day."

Then advice and gossip would follow.

"I know what I 'd do if I were in your place. Speak to his employer about it. Why don't you?"

All this talk merely made her weep the more, but she persisted in hoping and waiting; and, completely worn out, after every door was shut and the passage silent she would remain there leaning

upon her elbow, believing herself quite alone; absorbed by a single, fixed idea, she would repeat to herself quite loudly the story of all her misfortunes, with the abandon of one who has lived half her life in the streets. They were behindhand with their rent, every tradesman harassed them, the baker refused them bread, — and what would she do if her husband returned again without money? At last she was too weary to do more than count the hours and watch belated passers-by. She would re-enter, but long afterwards, when I thought all was over, I would hear a cough quite close to me upon the balcony. The poor woman was there again. Her restlessness would not permit her to remain within. She peered into the dark street, ruining her eyes, and seeing nothing but her own wretchedness.

Towards one or two o'clock, and sometimes much later, some one would be heard singing at the end of the lane. Arthur was returning. More frequently than not he would come dragging a boon-companion along with him to the very door, insisting, "Come in, come in." And even at the door he loitered, unable to decide whether or not he would enter, for he knew well what awaited him within. As he climbed the stairs the heavy sound of his footsteps echoed through the silence of the slumbering house, and filled him with an uneasy sensation, not unlike remorse. He talked aloud, pausing before each hovel to remark, "Good evening, Ma'me Weber; good-evening, Ma'me Mathieu." If no one answered, he burst forth with

a volley of abuse, and all the windows opened to return his maledictions. That was what he wished. In his drunken state he loved brawling and noise; and all this warmed him so that he became quite angry, less afraid to enter, when he reached his own quarters.

For that moment of entering was a terrible one.

"Open: it is I."

Then I would hear the woman's bare feet upon the floor, the striking of matches, and the story the man attempted to tell her as he entered; it was always the same: his comrades had led him away. "What 's-his-name — you know whom I mean — he works on the railroad — Well! he — "

The wife paid not the slightest attention to this.

"And your money?"

"There is none left," Arthur's voice would reply.

"You lie!"

And he did. No matter how deeply under the influence of liquor, he always left a few sous unspent, anticipating the return of his thirst on Monday. And it was this small remnant of his week's earnings that she tried to wrest from him. Arthur struggled, disputed the point.

"Did n't I tell you I drank it all?" he would cry. Without response she would descend upon him with all the strength her indignation and overstrung nerves had gathered. She shook him, ransacked, turned his pockets inside out. In a few moments the sound of money rolling upon the ground would be heard; the woman would grasp it eagerly with a triumphant laugh.

"There! you see now!"

Then followed an oath, the sound of blows descending heavily; the drunkard was taking his revenge. Once he had set out to beat her, he never paused. All that was vilest, most pernicious in these dreadful pothouse wines mounted to his brain, and those fumes must work off their effects in some way. The woman howled, the last bits of furniture in their hovel were smashed to pieces, the children, startled from their sleep, cried with fright, and all along the passage windows opened, and listeners remarked, —

"It is Arthur! It is Arthur!" Sometimes the father-in-law, an old rag-picker who lived in the neighboring lodging-house, would come to his daughter's rescue. But Arthur would lock the door that he need not be disturbed in his task. Then, through the locked door, a frightful dialogue would ensue between father and son-in-law, and we would catch charming fragments such as these:

"Your two years in prison were not enough for you, you scoundrel!" the old man would exclaim. And the drunkard would reply in a superb tone:

"Well! — I did spend two years in prison! What of that? At least I have paid my debt to society! Try to pay your own."

It seemed a very simple matter to him: "I stole — you put me in prison. We are quits."

However, when the old man was too persistent Arthur would grow impatient, open his door, and fall upon father-in-law, mother-in-law, and neighbors, and like Punchinello fight the whole world.

And yet he was not badly disposed. Many a Sabbath, on the day after one of these murderous assaults, this pacified drunkard, with not a sou left for a drink, would pass the day at home. Chairs were brought forth from various rooms. Ma'me Weber, Ma'me Mathieu, and indeed all the lodging-house, would install themselves upon the balcony and converse. Arthur played the agreeable, was the leading spirit; you would have taken him for one of those model mechanics who are constant attendants at evening-school. He assumed for the occasion a lamb-like, mild voice, declaimed fragments of ideas gathered a little from every source, thoughts concerning the rights of the working-man, the tyranny of capital. His poor wife, somewhat subdued from the effects of the beating received the night before, regarded him admiringly; nor was she his only admirer.

"Ah, that man, Arthur! if he only would!" Ma'me Weber often murmured with a sigh. To add the finishing touch, these ladies would ask him to sing. And he would sing that song of M. de *Belanger*, "The Swallows." Oh! that throaty voice, full of artificial tears, the working-man's inane sentimentality! Beneath the tarred-paper, mouldy veranda, old clothes were spread out in every direction, but between the lines a glimpse of the blue sky was seen, and all that vulgar crowd, charmed with the unreality of his attitudinizing, rolled their moistened eyes heavenward.

But all this did not hinder Arthur from spending his week's pay for drink on the following Saturday

night, and beating his wife as usual; neither could it hinder the fact that in that wretched rookery was a whole hive of little Arthurs like their father, waiting only until they arrived at his age to squander their pay upon drink and beat their wives also. And that is the race that would govern the world. "*Ah! wadadie,*" as my neighbors of the passage used to say.

THE THIRD READING.

As true as my name is Bélisaire, and I have my plane in my hand at this moment, if Papa Thiers imagines that the fine lesson he has taught us will be of the slightest use to us, it is because he does n't know the people of Paris. You see, monsieur, they may shoot us wholesale, transport us, export us, add Cayenne to Satory, and pack the prison-ships as close as sardines in a barrel, but the true Parisian loves a riot, and nothing can destroy that taste of his. We have it in our blood. What would you? It is n't politics so much that amuses us, but the noise it makes, the closed workshops, the gatherings, the lounging here and there; yes, and there's another thing I scarcely know how to explain to you.

To understand it, one should have been born where I was born, Rue de l'Orillon, in a carpenter's work-shop, should have served an apprenticeship from the time he was eight until he was fifteen years old, trundling a hand-barrow filled with chips along the faubourg. Ah! well! I can truly say I had my fill of revolutions in those days. Little though I was then, standing no higher than these boots of mine, — there was nothing lively astir in Paris but I was sure to be found on the spot. And

generally I knew in advance what was afoot. When I saw workmen walking arm in arm through the faubourg, taking up the entire sidewalk, while women stood at their doorways, chattering, gesticulating, and a great mob of people issued from the barrières, I said to myself as I wheeled on my chips, "We are in for it now! Good enough! something's up!"

And in fact there always was. Going home of an evening, I would enter the shop, and find it full of people; friends of my father's were discussing politics around his bench; some neighbors had brought him in the newspaper, for in those days you could not buy one for a sou, as at present. Those in the same house who wished to take it clubbed together, a number of them, and passed it round from story to story. Papa Bélisaire, who was never idle no matter what happened, kept his plane angrily at work as he listened to the latest news, and I remember, too, that on such days as those the moment we seated ourselves at the table the mother never failed to say to us, —

"Keep quiet, children, your father is out of sorts on account of political affairs."

You may well believe I did not understand very much of their cursed politics. All the same there were a few words that would force themselves into my head through hearing them so often, as for instance, —

"That rascally Guizot, who has gone to Gand —"

I did n't understand very clearly who that Guizot was, nor what going "to Gand" might mean, but

what odds! I repeated again and again with the others, —

"*Canaille de Guizot! canaille de Guizot!*"

And I was all the more pleased to refer to that poor Monsieur Guizot as "*canaille*" on account of the fact that in my mind I had confounded him with a big scoundrel of a policeman who was on duty at the Rue de l'Orillon, and made my life miserable for me on account of my barrow of chips. There was no love lost between the quarter and that big, red-faced fellow. Children, dogs, every one was at his heels; there was, however, a wine-seller who used to try to gain him over by slipping a glass of wine to him through a small opening in his shop. The big red face would come nearer and nearer, with an innocent air, and glance from right to left to see that none of his superiors were about, then, as he passed — whew! I've never seen any one else toss down a glass of wine as quickly as he did! Sly fellow! one had only to lie in wait for the moment when his elbow was raised to his mouth, steal behind him, and cry out, —

"Look out! *sergo!* The officer 's coming."

The people of Paris are all just like that. The policeman bears the brunt of everything. For every one is accustomed to hate these poor devils, to regard them as curs. If the ministry commit follies, the police pay the penalty, and once a glorious revolution is in progress, the ministry depart for Versailles, the policemen are thrown into the canal.

But to return to what I was telling you. —

whenever there was anything of importance going on in Paris, I was one of the first to know it. On those days all the small fry of the quarter would hold their meetings too, and together we would go down the faubourg. We could hear people exclaiming, "It is at Rue Montmartre! no — at Porte Saint-Denis." Others, whose business took them in that direction, would return, furious, because they had been unable to pass. Women were seen running towards the bakers' shops. Carriage entrances were closed. All this excitement went to our heads. We sang as we passed by, we jostled the little street vendors, who were quickly gathering up their goods and their baskets, as if it were some terribly stormy day. Sometimes when we reached the canal the bridges of the locks were already turned. Fiacres and trucks were compelled to wait there. Cabmen were cursing, and every one was uneasy. On the run we would scale the steps of the foot-bridge which at that time separated the faubourg from the Rue du Temple, and then we reached the boulevards.

Oh! what fun upon the boulevard on the day of *mardi gras* or on the day of a riot! Scarcely a carriage to be seen. One could rush along at his ease upon the driveway. When they saw us pass, the shopkeepers of every quarter knew well what it meant, and closed their shops quickly. We heard the clatter of shutters, but once their stores were closed these people would occupy the sidewalk in front of their doors, for with the Parisian no feeling is stronger than that of curiosity.

At last we would perceive a black mass, the mob itself, obstructing all travel. There it was! But to see it properly one must stand in the first row; and I can tell you, one was well thumped before he got there. However, by dint of shoving, jostling, sliding between the legs of others, we at last got where we wanted to be. Once we had taken our places in front of everybody, we breathed more freely, and were proud enough. And indeed the spectacle was worth all the trouble of getting there. No, believe me, neither Monsieur Bocage nor Monsieur Mélingue ever gave me such a flutter of the heart as that I felt when, looking ahead, in an open space at the end of the street I saw the chief of police advancing, decorated with his sash.

I heard the others exclaim, "The *commissaire!* the *commissaire!*"

But I said nothing. My teeth were tightly closed through pleasure and terror combined; what I felt was indescribable. I thought to myself, —

"The *commissaire* has come! Now look out for blows from his club."

It was not so much the blows from his club that impressed me as that big devil of a man himself, with his sash upon his black swallow-tail coat and that huge hat *de monsieur* he wore, which gave him the appearance of being out visiting, as it rose in the midst of all those shakos and cocked hats. That made a tremendous impression upon me. After a flourish from the drum, the chief of police began to mumble something. He was so

far from us that in spite of the intense silence his voice was lost in air, and all we could hear was —

"*Mn — mn — mn —*"

But we were as thoroughly posted as himself about the riot laws. We knew that we were entitled to three readings of the Riot Act before his stick could whack us. At the first reading no one budged an inch. We stood there undisturbed, our hands in our pockets. It is true that when the drum beat the second time some began to grow green, and to look right and left, to see which way he would pass. When the third time came, *p-r-r-t!* It was like the flight of a flock of partridges. There were howls, cat-cries; aprons, caps, and hats began to disappear, while behind them clubs proceeded to belabor on every side. Ah! no! there is no play on the stage that could ever give you such emotions as those. It was food for seven days' talk, when we related all this to the others who had not seen it; and how proud they were who could say, —

"I heard the third reading!"

It must be said, however, that for the sake of the fun one often risked losing some of his hide. Just imagine! One day — it was at Pointe Saint-Eustache — I don't know how the *commissaire* had reckoned, but no sooner was the second reading disposed of than the constables set to work, clubs in the air. I did not remain in waiting for them very long, you may believe. But all in vain I stretched my small legs to the utmost; one of those big devils fell upon me, and went for me at

such very short notice that after I had felt his stick whiz about me two or three times, he ended by giving it to me straight upon the head. Lord! what a whack! I had never seen so many stars in my life before. They brought me home with a broken head. But if you think that made me mend my ways — ah well! hardly; all the time poor Mamma Bélisaire was making compresses for me, I never once ceased exclaiming, —

"It isn't my fault. It is that rascally *commissaire*, who played a trick upon all of us. He read the Riot Act only twice!"

A FIRST-NIGHT PERFORMANCE.

IMPRESSIONS OF THE AUTHOR.

It was to begin at eight. In five minutes the curtain would rise. Stage-carpenters, manager, and property-man, every one was at his post. The actors in the first scene had placed themselves, and taken appropriate attitudes. I peeped for one last time through the gap of the curtain. The house was crowded, — fifteen hundred heads, one row rising above another; the lights fell upon a smiling and animated audience. I recognized a few faces in it, but only vaguely; their physiognomies seemed to me quite changed. Their faces wore a quizzical expression, their manner was arrogant, dogmatic, and already I could see lorgnettes aimed in my direction like pistols. In one part of the house I did discern a few dear faces, grown pale with anxiety and expectation; but how many were purely indifferent, and even unfavorably disposed!

And all that these people brought with them from the outer world, all their recklessness, preoccupation, listlessness, and mistrust, must be dispelled; that atmosphere of ennui and disaffection must be penetrated, — a common idea move all these human beings; my drama, to live, must draw its inspiration from those inexorable eyes. I would have

delayed, prevented the curtain from rising, but no! it is too late now. I hear the three taps of the stick, a prelude from the orchestra, and then there is a deep silence. From the wings comes a voice which sounds hollow and far away, lost in the immensity of the house. My play has begun. Ah, wretched one! what have I done?

An awful moment! I know not where to turn, or what will become of me. Should one remain there, leaning against a gas-wing, ears strained to hear, and heart refusing to beat? — encourage the actors when he so greatly needs some encouragement himself? — talk, scarcely knowing what he is saying, and smile when the dazed look in his eyes betrays that his thought is far away? Confound it all, I would rather slip into the house somewhere, and stand face to face with danger!

Concealed in a box in the pit, I try to seem an indifferent spectator, quite apart from it all, and as if I had not seen the dust of those boards clinging to my play for the past two months, as if I myself had not decided upon every gesture, every least detail of the mounting of the piece, from the mechanism of entrances and exits even to the turning up of the gas. A singular feeling possesses me. I wish to listen, and yet cannot. I am uneasy, completely upset. I hear the quick turning of keys in the box-doors, the moving of stools, fits of contagious coughing, one voice answering another, — whispered conversations behind fans, the rustling of gowns, a multitude of insignificant sounds that seem of enormous dimensions to me; gestures and

attitudes that seem to show hostility, backs that appear to wear a discontented air, and sprawling elbows, intercept the entire scene.

In front of me a very young man wearing eye-glasses, who is taking notes with a grave air, observes, —

"It is puerile!"

In a box at my side a low voice is saying, —

"To-morrow, you remember."

"Is it to-morrow?"

"Yes, to-morrow without fail."

It would appear that great importance is attached to to-morrow in the minds of these people. I am thinking only of to-day. In the midst of all this confusion, not a point of my play tells, nothing makes the least impression. The voices of the actors, instead of rising, filling the house, are lost before they reach the footlights, fall with a dull sound into the prompter's box, amid an inane clapping of hands from the claque. What ails that gentleman who sits up aloft? What vexes him? I am really intimidated. I go out.

When I reach the street I find it is dark and rainy, but I scarcely perceive that. Boxes and galleries with luminous rows of heads are whirling before me, and in their midst one fixed and shining point, — the scene on the stage. This grows fainter as I get farther away from it. I walk on, in fruitless effort to pull myself together; I cannot efface that accursed scene, and the drama, which I know by heart, continues to play itself out, — drags on lugubriously in my brain. It is as though I

carried about with me some evil dream, with which mingle the people who jostle against me, and the slush and noise of the street. At the edge of the boulevard a sharp whistle stops me, and I grow pale. Imbecile! It is merely a whistle starting an omnibus. As I walk on, the rain increases. I imagine that in the theatre too it must be raining upon my drama, that its own weight has killed it, that it falls to pieces, and that my heroes, ashamed and worn out, are plodding after me along the wet sidewalks which glisten beneath the gaslight.

To dispel these gloomy ideas, I enter a café. I try to read, but the letters run together, dance, spread apart, and whirl. I cannot even tell what these words are trying to say; they seem bizarre, devoid of meaning. This reminds me of an incident of some years ago. It was at sea, the weather very stormy. I tried to read. Beneath a roof flooded with water, where I lay, I had found and tried to read an English grammar. There with the roar of the waves in my ears and the sound of the wrenching of masts, — to divert myself from danger, to avoid seeing those torrents of greenish water that fell upon the deck, pouring all over it, I devoted all my energies to the absorbing study of the English *th*. But vainly did I read aloud, repeat the words, shouting them almost; my brain was deafened with the howling of the sea, the sharp whistling of the blast through the yards.

The paper I am holding at this moment seems to me as incomprehensible as was my English grammar; however, perhaps because I have stared

so closely at the big sheet spread out before me, I seem to see printed in sharp, concise lines to-morrow's articles, and my own name discussed in phrases that stick like thorns, written with a pen dipped in gall. Suddenly the gas is turned down. The café is closing.

Is it time for that? What can be the hour?

The boulevards are full of people. The theatres are emptied. Doubtless I pass some who have seen my play. I would like to question them, know what they thought, but at the same time I pass on quickly, that I need not overhear reflections aloud, whole *feuilletons* in the streets. Ah! how happy are they who can return homeward with the consciousness that they have never written a play!

I stand before the theatre. It is closed. The lights are extinguished. Decidedly I shall gain no information to-night, but, as I look at the damp bill-boards and the great candelabra whose lights blink at the entrance, an intense sadness comes over me. That great building, which a while ago lent light and animation to all this part of the boulevard, is dull and lifeless now, gloomy, deserted, and dripping as though after a fire. Ah, well! At last it is over. Six long months of labor, of dreams, weariness alternating with hope, all they meant is lost, shrivelled, melted into nothingness in a single evening, under the glaring gaslight.

CHEESE-SOUP.

It was a little chamber in the fifth story, one of those attics where the rain beats straight upon the skylight; at the present hour, when night has come, such rooms seem to be lost, roof and all, in gloom and storm. And yet this chamber is pleasant, cozy, and upon entering it, one feels an indescribable sensation of comfort, which the gusts of wind without, and the torrents of rain dripping from the gutters only increase. You might almost believe yourself to be in a warm nest at the top of some tall tree. For the moment the nest is empty; its occupant is not there, but you feel sure he will soon return. Everything within seems to await his coming. Upon a smothered fire a little soup-kettle is boiling tranquilly with a murmur of satisfaction. It keeps rather a late vigil, and although accustomed to that, judging by its sides browned through frequent contact with the flames, it becomes impatient now and then, and its cover rises, stirred by the steam; then a warm, appetizing whiff ascends, and permeates the whole chamber.

Oh! the delicious odor of cheese-soup!

At times too the fire clears itself of cinders, which come tumbling down through the logs, while a tiny flame darts out its tongue from beneath,

lighting the lower part of the room, as if making a tour of inspection to be assured that everything is in order. Ah, yes, order itself reigns there, and the master may return any moment he chooses. The Algerian curtains are drawn in front of the windows, and draped comfortably about the bed. There is the big arm-chair spreading itself at full length in front of the fire; the table stands in one corner, the cloth spread, dishes set for one solitary diner, the lamp ready to be lighted, and beside the plate is a book, the companion of that lonely repast. And not only is the soup-pot worn through frequent contact with the fire, but the flowers upon each dish are also faded, through repeated washings, and the book is worn at the edges. Age and long use have softened the appearance of all these well-worn things. One feels too that this lodger is obliged to return very late each evening, and that it pleases him, when he enters, to find that little supper simmering away, perfuming and warming the chamber to which he returns.

Oh! the savory odor of cheese-soup!

Observing the neatness of that bachelor apartment, I imagine that its tenant must be some employé, one of those beings whose devotion to the minutest details compels them to regulate all their living with the same punctuality with which they dispose of things official, and as methodically as they label each portfolio.

The extreme lateness of his return would seem to indicate that he is one of the night force in the postal or telegraph service. I fancy I see him,

seated behind a grating, his half-sleeves of lustrine drawn up to the elbow, his velvet calotte upon his head, while he sorts and stamps letters, winds the blue banderoles of despatches, preparing for Paris asleep, or awake in pursuit of pleasure, the affairs of to-morrow.

But no — this is not his business. For, as it penetrates each recess of the chamber, the tiny flame of the hearth gleams upon large photographs hanging on the walls. Emerging from the shadow, framed in gold and magnificently draped, may be seen the Emperor Augustus, Mahomet, Félix, Roman knight, Armenian governor, crowns, helmets, tiaras, and turbans, while beneath all these different head-dresses there is always the same head, erect and solemn, the head of the master of the place, the fortunate and lordly personage for whom that fragrant soup simmers away, bubbling gently upon the warm cinders.

Oh! the delicious odor of that cheese-soup!

Ah, no! this is no employé of the post-office. This is some emperor, a world-master, one of those providential beings who on those evenings when the repertoire is given causes the roof of the Odéon to tremble, one who has merely to command, "Seize him, guards!" and the guards obey on the instant. At this present moment he is there in his palace, across the water. With buskined heels, his chlamys upon his shoulder, he wanders beneath porticos, declaiming with portentous frown, wearing a wearied air through all his tragic tirades. And indeed it is dispiriting to

play to empty benches. And the auditorium of the Odéon seems so vast, so cold, on the evening of a tragedy! Suddenly the emperor, half-frozen beneath his purple, feels a warm thrill run through his body. His eye kindles, his nostrils dilate. For he is dreaming of the warm room to which he will return, the table set, the lamp ready to light, all his little belongings arranged in order, with that homely attention to trifles shown by the actor who in private life makes amends for stage extravagances and irregularities. He fancies himself uncovering that soup-pot and filling his flowered plate.

Oh, the savory odor of that cheese-soup!

From that moment he is no longer the same man. The stiff folds of his chlamys, the marble stairs, the coldness of the porticos, these things vex him no longer. He becomes animated, hastens the play, precipitates the action. For what if his fire should go out! As the evening advances, the vision grows nearer, and puts new life into him. Miraculous! the Odéon itself seems to be thawing. The old habitués of the orchestra, aroused from their torpor, find this Marancourt truly magnificent, especially in the last scenes. And indeed, as the *dénoûment* approaches the decisive hour when the traitors are to be poniarded, and princesses to be married, the face of the emperor wears a beatific expression, an air of singular serenity. His stomach hollow with hunger after so many emotions and tirades, he fancies he is at home again, seated at his little table, and his glance wanders from Cinna

to Maximus with a kindly and tender smile, as though already he saw those charming white threads which lengthen ōn the end of a spoon when chēese-soup, after simmering properly, is just cooked, and poured out piping-hot.

THE LAST BOOK.

"HE is dead!" some one said to me on the stairway.

For some days past I had been expecting this sad news. I knew that at any moment the tidings might greet me upon the threshold, and yet there was something of unexpectedness in the blow when it came. With heavy heart and trembling lips I entered the humble apartment of a man of letters. The room in which his work had been done was the most prominent of all, for the despotism of learning had monopolized whatever comfort or light the home possessed.

He lay there upon an iron bed — very low and small it was; his table was loaded with papers; his large handwriting cut short in the middle of the page, his pen still standing in his ink-bottle, told how suddenly death had smitten him. Behind the bed, a tall, oaken press, overflowing with papers and manuscripts, stood half open, almost at his head. About him on every side, books, — nothing but books; in every corner, on shelves, on chairs, on the desk, piled upon the floor, in corners, even to the foot of the bed. When he was writing, seated at his table, these piles of books, this litter upon which no dust had gathered, could please the eyes.

They seemed to be alive, they suggested the activity of labor. But in this chamber of death the sight of them was mournful. All these poor books piled up and toppling over looked now as though they too were ready to start upon a journey, to be lost in the great library of chance, scattered in auction-rooms, upon the quays, in shop-windows, their leaves fingered by the wind and by the passing lounger.

I embraced him where he lay, and stood gazing at him, startled as I touched his forehead, cold and heavy as stone. Suddenly the door opened. A clerk from some publisher entered joyously, loaded down, out of breath, and threw upon the table a package of books fresh from the press.

"Bachelin sent these," he exclaimed; then observing the figure upon the bed, he recoiled, raised his cap, and retired discreetly.

It seemed horribly ironic that this package, whose sending had been delayed for a month, this package awaited by the sick man with so much impatience, should have been received by the dead. Poor friend! it was his last book, the one for which he expected most. With what minute carefulness his hands, trembling even then with fever, had corrected the proof-sheets. How he longed to hasten the day when he would handle that first edition! During the last days of his illness, when he could no longer speak, his eyes gazed fixedly towards the door, and if the printers, proof-readers, binders, and all that world of people employed in bringing into the world the work of one individual could have seen

that anguished and expectant glance, every hand would have hastened its work; the type would have been set in pages more rapidly, the pages would have grown into volumes, that they might have reached him in time, that is to say, a day earlier, and thus have given the dying man the delight of recognizing, in well-printed sentences, about which clung all the fragrance of a new book, those ideas which he felt were already fading, vanishing from his memory.

And even in the very plenitude of life that pleasure is one of which a writer never wearies. To open a first copy of his work, to see it assume definite form, which stands out in bold outline, his thoughts no longer seething in the brain, no longer in that first ebullition where all is as yet somewhat vague, — what a delightful sensation! In youth, it simply dazzles one; the letters almost blind him, run together, look blue and yellow at once, as though his very brain were intoxicated with sunshine. Later, with this joy of the author mingles a tinge of sadness, of regret that he has not said all he wished to say. That within him which has never said itself in words seems always far more beautiful than that which is already accomplished. How much is lost in that journey from the brain to the hand! In his deepest dreaming, the conception of the book seems to resemble one of those lovely *medusæ* of the Mediterranean, which flit through the sea like floating phantoms, but when they lie upon the sand, nothing is seen but water, a few discolored drops that are soon dried in the air.

Alas! of these joys and disillusions the poor fellow received none from his last work. It was heart-rending to gaze at this lifeless head, drooping so heavily upon the pillow, asleep in death, while at his side was that book, so fresh and new, that book which would soon be seen in the shop-windows, form a part of the talk of the street, the life of the day, — whose title passers-by would read mechanically, carrying it away in the memory, impressed upon the retina, with the name of its author inscribed now upon that sadder leaf of the city's register — that name whose letter looked so bright, so gay on the cover, its color still fresh, unfaded. The entire problem of the soul and the body seemed to be there; that rigid corpse would so soon be given to earth and forgotten, while the book, starting forth on its life apart from him, like a visible soul, was full of vitality, and perhaps — a thing immortal.

"He promised me a first edition," I heard a lachrymose voice near me whisper. I looked around, and my glance met the keen eye of a gold-spectacled enthusiast. I was acquainted with him, and you also are, my friends who write. He was the bibliophile who knocks at your door as soon as your volume is announced, — two timid but persistent knocks that resemble himself. He enters smiling, bowing low, wriggling about you, and he addresses you as "dear master!" and does not depart without carrying away your last book. Merely the last! He has all the others. This only he still lacks. And how can one refuse him?

He arrives so opportunely, he knows just when to catch you, while you are still in the midst of that joy of which we were speaking, full of the abandon of the Envoy or the Dedication. Ah! that terrible little man, whom nothing rebuffs, neither heavy doors nor frozen greetings, neither wind, rain, nor distance. Of a morning you encounter him in the Rue de la Pompe, knocking at the low door of the Patriarch of Passy. At nightfall he returns from Marly with Sardou's latest drama under his arm. And so, forever upon the go, always in quest, he fills his hours, though he works not, fills his shelves, though he buys not.

Surely this passion for books must have been very strong in the man, to have brought him even to the bedside of the dead.

"Here is your copy — take it," I said impatiently. He not merely took it, he swallowed it up. Once the volume had quite disappeared in his pocket he remained there without budging, without speaking; his head leaning upon his elbow, he wiped his glasses with a softened air. What was he waiting for? What kept him there? Perhaps some passing feeling of shame, embarrassment at the thought of leaving so suddenly, as if he had merely come for the book?

Ah, no!

Upon the table, the wrapper half removed, he had perceived copies the book-lover prizes — their edges rough, uncut, wide margins, vignettes, and tailpieces. In spite of his meditative attitude, his

pensive absorption, all was revealed. The wretch had caught sight of them.

Oh, this mania for seeing things! Even I myself was distracted for a moment from my emotion. Through my tears I could not help following that painful bit of comedy played at the dead man's bedside. Slowly, with little invisible jerks, the book-lover approached the table. His hand, as if by chance, closed upon one of those volumes; he turned it about, opened it, fingered the leaves. By degrees his eye kindled, the blood mounted to his cheeks. The magic of the book operated upon him. At last he could no longer contain his emotion. He captured a copy. "It is for Monsieur de Sainte-Beuve," he said half audibly; and in his feverish anxiety and fear lest some one should take it from him, perhaps, too, to convince me that it was indeed intended for Monsieur de Sainte-Beuve, he added, very gravely, in a tone of indescribable compunction, "of the *Académie française!*" and disappeared.

HOUSE FOR SALE!

ABOVE the gate, a wooden gate, badly put together, and not preventing the sandy soil of the little garden from mingling with the earth of the road, a sign had hung for some time, scarcely stirred under the sun of summer, but twisted and shaken by every gale of autumn: *House for Sale!* And something seemed to say that it was a deserted house as well, so deep was the silence surrounding it.

And yet some one dwelt there. A tiny bluish ring of smoke ascending from the brick chimney which rose slightly above the wall, betrayed that an existence was in hiding here, — an existence as sad, as inobtrusive as the smoke of that meagre fire. Through the loose and rickety boards of that gate could be seen, not the abandon and emptiness, that indescribable something in the air which precedes and announces an auction sale and departure, but instead were trim walks, rounded arbors, water-cans near an artificial basin, and gardener's tools leaning against the side of the tiny house. It was merely a peasant's cottage built on an incline, propped by a tiny stairway, which placed the first story on the shady side, the ground-floor facing the south. On that side it looked like

a hothouse. There were bell-glasses piled up along the walks, empty flower-pots turned upside down; others, in rows and filled with geraniums and verbenas, stood in the warm, white sand. Except for the shade of three great plane trees, the garden basked in sunshine. A fruit-wall, and fruit trees with fan-shaped props of iron wire stood in the sunshine, somewhat robbed of their leafage, but merely for the sake of the fruit. There were strawberry-beds too, and peas well propped; in the midst of all these things, surrounded by order and calm, an old man in a straw hat went up and down through the walks all day long, watering his garden through the early hours of the day, pruning branches, and trimming borders.

The old man knew no one in the neighborhood. Except for the baker's wagon, which stopped at every door of the only street in the village, he never received a visit. Sometimes, in search of one of those lots of land half-way up the hill, always fruitful, and making such charming orchards, some passer-by would sight the sign, and pause to ring.

At first the house would remain deaf. At the second ring there was heard the sound of wooden shoes approaching slowly from the farthest end of the garden, and the old man opened the door halfway with a furious air.

"What do you want?"

"Is this house for sale?"

"Yes," answered the worthy man, with some

effort. "Yes, it is for sale, but I will tell you in advance that the price is very high;" and his hand was placed upon the door, ready to close it and obstruct all entrance. And his eyes compelled you to go away, they showed such anger; he remained there, guarding like a dragon his plots of vegetables and his little sand-yard. People passed on their way, asking themselves what maniac this might be with whom they had to deal, and what was meant by this folly of putting up that sign "For Sale," and showing such desire that his house should remain unsold.

The mystery was explained to me. One day as I passed the little house, I heard the sound of animated voices in eager discussion.

"It must be sold, papa, it must be sold. You promised."

And the tremulous voice of the old man was heard, —

"But, my children, I ask nothing better than to sell it. Look! Have I not put up a sign?"

I thus learned that these were his sons and his daughters-in-law, petty Parisian shopkeepers, who were compelling him to dispose of this well-loved spot. For what reason? I do not know. But one thing was certain: they had begun to find that matters were moving too slowly; and from that day they appeared regularly every Sunday to harass the unfortunate man, and oblige him to keep his promise. In that deep Sabbath stillness, when even the earth itself rests after sowing and laboring all week long, I could hear those voices very

plainly from the road. The shopkeepers were talking, arguing among themselves, as they played *tonneau*, and that word "money," spoken by those sharp voices, had all the hard metallic sound of the quoits they were tossing. In the evening they would all depart again, and after the old man had reconducted them along the road for a few steps he returned quickly, and gladly closed his big gate, with another week of respite before him. For seven days' space the house was silent again. In the little sun-baked garden nothing could be heard but the sound of sand crushed under a heavy foot, and the dragging of a rake.

But as weeks went on the old man was tormented and pressed more and more. The shopkeepers employed every means. Little children were brought there to seduce him.

"Don't you see, grandpapa? when the house is sold you shall live with us! We shall all be so happy together." And there were whispered asides in every corner, endless promenades along the walks, calculations made in a loud voice. On one occasion I heard one of the daughters exclaim, —

"The shanty is not worth a hundred sous. It is only fit to be torn down."

The old man listened silently. They talked of him as though he were already dead, of his house as if it were already demolished. He walked about, his body bent, his eyes full of tears, through force of habit feeling for a branch he might prune, a fruit he might care for, in passing, and it was

evident that his life was so firmly rooted in this little spot of earth that he had not strength to tear himself away from it. And, indeed, no matter what was said to him, he always contrived to put off the moment of departure. In summer, with the ripening of those slightly acid fruits which exhale the freshness of the season, as the cherries and the currants black and red ripened, he said, —

"We must wait till after they have been gathered. I will sell it immediately after that."

But after the gathering, when the cherry season had gone by, came the peaches, then the grapes, and after the grapes those beautiful brown medlars which may be gathered almost up to the time of the first snow-fall. Then winter arrived. The country was dismal then, the garden had nothing left in it. No passers-by, no purchasers. The shopkeepers themselves no longer appeared of a Sunday. Three long months of rest in which to prepare for the sowing, to prune the fruit trees while that useless sign rocked back and forth upon the road, swayed by wind and rain.

At length, grown impatient, and persuaded that the old man was striving to drive away every purchaser, his children took a decided step. One of the daughters-in-law proceeded to install herself in the house, — a little shopwoman, finely arrayed from early morning, comely in appearance, and possessing that artificial sweetness, that obsequious amiability cultivated by people accustomed to a commercial life. The very highway seemed to belong to her. She opened the gate

wide, talked loudly, smiling at every passer-by, as if to say,—

"Come in. Don't you see that the house is for sale?"

No more respite for the poor old man. At times he would endeavor to forget her presence, dig his garden-plots, and sow them once more, as a man who stands in the presence of death, and loves to delude even his fears by devising new plans. But all the time the shopwoman followed him about, tormenting him: "Bah! what good is that?—You are taking all this trouble for others!"

He never replied to her, but continued his work with a singular obstinacy. Had he let his garden alone, he would have felt that already it was partly lost to him, that he must begin to wean himself from it; therefore he did not permit a single blade of grass in the walks, or a single gourmand among his rose bushes.

Meanwhile purchasers did not present themselves. The war was in progress, and all in vain did the woman keep that gate wide open, and make eyes affably at the road. She saw loads of furniture moved away, nothing more. Only dust entered at the gate. From day to day the woman's temper grew more sour. Her business in Paris needed her presence. I heard her heap reproaches upon her father-in-law, make genuine scenes with him, slamming the doors. The old man bent his back and said nothing, but consoled himself with watching his little peas beginning to climb, and

with seeing always in the same place that sign, *House for Sale !*

That year, when I arrived in the country, I recognized the house, but alas! the sign was no longer there. Torn, mouldy placards still hung along the walls, but all was over! The house had been sold. Instead of the great gray entrance was a green gate, freshly painted, with a swelling fronton, and a small grated opening through which one could peep into the garden. It was no longer the fruit-orchard of other days, but a bourgeois heap of flower-beds, of lawns and cascades, and everything was reflected in a huge metal ball which swayed back and forth in front of the steps. Reflected in this ball the walks were seen bordered with gaudy flower-beds, and two figures whose size was even exaggerated; one was a big, red-faced man, dripping with perspiration, and buried in a rustic chair; the other was an enormous woman, who cried, quite out of breath, as she brandished a watering-pot, —

" I have put fourteen canfuls upon the balsams ! "

They had built for themselves, renovated the palisades, and in this little house, completely remodelled and still smelling of paint, a piano was playing familiar quadrilles and polkas and dance-hall airs at full speed. This dance-music, which could be heard out on the road, making one warm to listen, the thick dust of that July day, the vulgar display of big flowers and fat women, this excessive and trivial gayety rent my heart. I was thinking of the poor old man who used to walk

there, so happy and peaceful. I pictured him in Paris, his straw hat upon his head; I seemed to see the bent shoulders of the old gardener as he wandered about in the middle of some back shop, weary, timid, tearful, while his daughter-in-law, the triumphant owner of a new counter, jingled the money the little house had brought.

YULE-TIDE STORIES.

I.

A CHRISTMAS-EVE REVEL IN THE MARAIS.

M. MAJESTÉ, manufacturer of seltzer-water in the Marais, has been celebrating Christmas-eve with a little party of friends in the Place Royale, and now is returning homeward, humming a tune to himself. Saint Paul strikes two. "How late it is!" says the good man, and he hastens. But the pavement is slippery, the streets dark, and, besides, in that infernal old quarter, which dates from the days when vehicles were rare, there are so many windings, corners, and spur-stones in front of the gates for the convenience of horsemen, that all these things prevent a man from making speed, especially when his legs are a little heavy, and his eyes somewhat dimmed, after all the toasts of the evening. However, M. Majesté reaches home at last. He pauses before a tall, decorated portal where a scutcheon lately gilded, gleams in the light of the moon; the ancient armorial bearings have been re-painted, and now serve as the sign of his manufacturing establishment, —

FORMER HÔTEL DE NESMOND.
MAJESTÉ JUNIOR,
MANUFACTURER OF SELTZER-WATER.

Upon all the siphons of the factory, on bill-heads and letter-heads also, are displayed the ancient, resplendent arms of Nesmond.

The portal passed, the courtyard is entered; it is large, bright, and airy, and in the day-time, when its entrance is opened, all the street is lighted by it. At the farther end is a great building, very ancient, the dark walls carved and decorated, swelling balconies of iron, stone balconies with pilasters, immense, lofty windows, surmounted with frontons, their capitals rising even to the top story; there was roof within roof, and, crowning all, dormer windows looked out from masses of slate, each encircled with garlands like a mirror. There was also a great stone stairway, corroded from many a rain; a poor lean vine clung to the walls, as black as the cord hanging from the pulley in the loft; an indescribable air of sadness and decay clung to everything. This was the ancient Hôtel de Nesmond. By day the aspect of the place was different. The words "*Office, Shop, Workman's Entrance,*" standing in gilded letters upon the old walls, make them look alive and modern. Teams from the railway stations pass and shake the portal. Clerks come to the stone steps, each with pen behind his ear, and ready to receive merchandise. The courtyard is loaded with cases, baskets, straw, and packing-cloth. It is easily perceived that this is a factory. But in the deep silence of the night, when the wintry moonlight darts through that mass of complicated roofs, its light interwoven with shadows, the ancient house of the Nesmonds

assumes once more its seigniorial aspect. The carving of the balconies looks like lace-work, the court of honor seems larger than before, and the old staircase, unequally lighted, has nooks which remind you of dim cathedral corners, empty niches and hidden steps like those of an altar.

And on this special evening M. Majesté finds that his house presents a singular appearance. As he crosses the deserted courtyard the sound of his footsteps impresses him. The staircase seems immense to him, and difficult to climb. No doubt the festivities of the evening have something to do with this. Arrived at the first story he stops to regain breath, and approaches a window. Ah! see what it is to inhabit an historic house. Monsieur Majesté is not poetical, no, indeed! and yet, as he looks upon that beautiful, aristocratic courtyard, where the moon spreads a veil of blue light, as he looks at this venerable place, once a nobleman's residence and now appearing as if asleep, its roofs benumbed beneath their hood of snow, thoughts of the other world come to him.

"Well, now! what if the Nesmonds returned?"

At this moment a loud ringing of bells reaches his ears; the folding-doors at the entrance of the house open so quickly and brusquely that the street-lamp is extinguished, and for some moments there is heard below, in the doorway wrapped in shadow, an indistinct sound, the sound of voices whispering, that mingle with a rustling noise. They dispute, press forward, hasten to enter. Lackeys, innumerable lackeys are there, coaches

with plate-glass doors and windows gleam in the moonlight, sedan-chairs move to and fro, a torch on each side flaming up as the current of air from the portal strikes them. In no time the courtyard is full of people. But at the foot of the stone steps the confusion ceases. People are seen descending from their carriages, bowing to each other; they enter, talking together as if they are acquainted with the house. There is a rustling of silk on the steps, a clatter of swords. Only white heads are seen, locks so heavily powdered that they look dull and dead; all these voices are thin and clear, and slightly tremulous; their tiny peals of laughter are hollow, without volume; their footsteps scarcely seem to touch the ground. All these men and women appear to be old, very old. Their eyes are sunken; their jewels have no glow of fire; the ancient silks they wear shimmer softly with changing tints which gleam faintly beneath the light from the torches; and above all this splendor floats a little cloud of powder, which rises from all these heads with coiffures piled up high and rolled into little ringlets; at each of their charming courtesies, somewhat stiff because of swords and big panniers, that tiny cloud rises. Soon the entire house appears to be haunted. Torches gleam from window to window, go up and down along the winding stairs, and are seen even in the dormer windows of the roof, which catch a gleam of all this animation and merry-making. The entire Hôtel de Nesmond is illumined as if a bright ray from the setting sun had kindled its windows.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* they will set the house afire!" said Monsieur Majesté. And, awakened from his stupor, he tries to shake the numbness out of his legs, and descends quickly into the courtyard, where the lackeys have just lighted a big, bright fire. M. Majesté approaches and speaks to them. The lackeys do not answer him, but continue to talk in a whisper among themselves; yet, as they talk, not the slightest vapor escapes from their lips into the glacial darkness of the night. Monsieur Majesté is not very well pleased, but one thing reassures him. That great fire which leaps straight into the air to such a height is a most singular fire, a flame without warmth, a fire which is bright, but does not burn. His mind set at rest on that score, the good man climbs the steps, and enters his store-rooms.

These store-rooms on the ground-floor were in former days magnificent reception-rooms. Bits of tarnished gold still glitter at every corner. Mythological figures circle about the ceiling, surround the mirrors, float above the doors in vague tints somewhat dimmed, like the memories of by-gone years. Unfortunately there are no curtains, no furniture left. Only baskets and big packing-cases full of siphons with pewter heads; behind the windows the blackened, withered branches of an old lilac tree rise. When M. Majesté enters, he finds his store-room lighted and full of people. He salutes them, but no one pays the slightest attention to him. The women, each leaning on the arm of her cavalier, continue to rustle their satin pel-

isses as they make little, mincing, ceremonious gestures. They promenade, talk, and disperse. Verily, all these ancient marquises seem to find themselves quite at home. Before a painted pier-glass one tiny apparition pauses, all of a tremble, and whispers, "To think that this is I! — just look at me!" and she glances with a smile towards a Diana who is seen in the wainscoting, slender, rose-tinted, a crescent upon her forehead.

"Nesmond! come here and look at your coat of arms!" and every one laughs to see the Nesmond arms blazoned upon a packing-cloth, and the name of Majesté underneath. "Ha, ha, ha! — *Majesté!* What! have their Majesties still a corner in France?"

And endless gayety greets this discovery, tiny, flute-like peals of laughter, fingers tossed in the air, and fantastic grimaces.

Suddenly some one exclaims, —

"Champagne, champagne!"

"But — it cannot be."

"But — it is."

"Yes, yes, it is champagne! Come, Countess, quick! a little for the sake of Christmas-eve!"

It is M. Majesté's seltzer-water they have mistaken for champagne. They find it slightly flat, but — bah! they drink it just the same, and as these poor little ghosts are somewhat light-headed, by degrees that foaming seltzer animates, excites them, and fills them with a longing to dance. Minuets are formed.

Four fine violins Nesmond has summoned com-

mence an air of Rameau's, all in triolets; its quick, short steps have a melancholy ring in spite of the vivacity of the rhythm. It was delightful to see all these charming old couples turn about slowly, saluting each other to the measure of that solemn music. The very garments of the dancers seemed to renew their youth, even those golden waistcoats, brocaded coats, and diamond-buckled shoes; the walls themselves seemed alive as they listened to those ancient airs. The old mirror, confined in the wall for two hundred years, scratched and blackened at the corners, recognized them also, and reflected the image of each dancer, — a reflection slightly dimmed, as if with the tender emotion of a regret. In the midst of all this elegance, M. Majesté feels uneasy. He squats behind a packing-box, and watches them. By slow degrees day arrives. Through the glass doors of the storeroom he sees the courtyard grow lighter; then the light begins to come through the top of the windows, and at last one whole side of the room is lighted. As the light grows brighter, the figures fade, and become indistinct. After a while, M. Majesté can see only two small violins lingering in a corner, and as the daylight touches them, they, too, vanish. In the courtyard he can still perceive, but vaguely, the shape of a sedan-chair, a powdered head sown with emeralds, and the last spark from a torch which the lackeys have thrown on the pavement, mingling with the sparks from the wheels of a wagon which passes heavily through the portal, rumbling as it enters.

II.

THE THREE LOW MASSES.

I.

"Two truffled turkeys, Garrigou?"

"Yes, *révérend*, two magnificent turkeys, stuffed with truffles. I should know something about them, for I myself helped to fill them. It seemed as if their skin must crack in roasting, they were so well-filled."

"*Jésus-Maria!* How I love truffles. Quick, Garrigou! bring me my surplice. And with the turkeys, did you see aught else in the kitchen?"

"Oh, all sorts of good things. Since noon we did nothing but pluck pheasants, hoopoes, pullets, and grouse; feathers were flying in every direction; then from the fish-pond were brought eels and golden carp, trout and —"

"How large were those trout, Garrigou?"

"As large as *that*, reverend father, enormous!"

"*Dieu!* methinks I see them at this moment. Have you filled the flagons with wine?"

"Yes, *révérend*, I have filled them with wine, but indeed it is no such wine as that you will drink immediately the midnight mass is over. If you could see all that is in the dining-hall of the castle, the decanters flaming with wine of all colors, and the silver plates, the carved épergnes, the flowers,

the candelabra! Never again will the world see the like! Monsieur le Marquis has invited all the lords of the neighborhood. There will be at least forty of you at table, without counting either the bailiff or the notary. Ah! you are fortunate indeed to be one of them, *révérend*. I merely caught a whiff of those fine turkeys, and the odor of the truffles follows me everywhere. *Meuh!*"

"Come, come, my son. Let us beware of the sin of gluttony, especially upon the Eve of the Nativity. Make haste to light the candles upon the altar, and ring the first bell for mass; for the hour of midnight approaches, and we must not be late."

This conversation took place in the Christmas-season of the year of grace one thousand six hundred — and it matters not how many years beside — between the Révérend Dom Balaguère, ancient prior of the Order of Barnabas, at that time chaplain of the Sires of Trinquelague, and his petty-clerk, Garrigou, or to be more exact, him whom the prior believed to be his clerk Garrigou; for you will see that the Evil One, on that evening, had assumed the round face and undecided features of the young sacristan, that he might the more easily lead the reverend father into temptation and force him to commit the frightful sin of gluttony. The self-styled Garrigou (*hum! hum!*) began to ring the bells of the seigniorial chapel with all his might; the reverend father at last invested himself with his chasuble in the small sacristy of the castle. But, his spirit already somewhat disturbed by all those gastro-

nomic descriptions, he repeated to himself while donning his vestments, —

"Roast turkeys, golden carps, and trouts as big as *that!*" Without, the night-wind blew, scattering the music of the bells, and one after another, lights began to appear along the sides of Mont Ventoux, close to whose summit rose the ancient towers of Trinquelague. The neighboring farmers were going to midnight mass in the castle. They climbed the hill in groups of five and six, singing as they went, the father leading, a lantern in his hands, the women wrapped in their great brown cloaks, in which their children too cuddled, and sought shelter. In spite of the lateness of the hour and the coldness of the night, all these good people walked briskly, sustained by the one thought that after mass was done there would be, as had always been the yearly custom, a table spread for them in the kitchens below. From time to time, upon the rude ascent, some nobleman's carriage, preceded by torch-bearers, was sighted, the glass gleaming in the moonlight; or a mule would be seen trotting past, jingling its bells, and by the light of torches enveloped in vapor, the farmers recognized their bailiff, and saluted him as he passed by.

"Good-evening, good-evening, Master Arnoton."

"Good-evening, good-evening, my children."

The night was clear, the stars sparkled frostily, the wind nipped keenly, and the fine sleet which clung to garments without wetting them, preserved former traditions of a Christmas white with snow. Above, on the hill, loomed the castle, their visible

goal, an enormous pile, with towers and gables, with the belfry of the chapel rising into the dark blue sky, and a host of tiny lights flashing, moving to and fro, waving at every window, and appearing not unlike sparks from a charred mass of paper, when seen against the sombre background of the building. The drawbridge and the postern passed, the chapel must be entered by crossing the outer courtyard, full of coaches, lackeys, and sedan-chairs, brightly lighted by the torch-fires and the blaze from the kitchens; various sounds were heard, the jingling of spits as they turned, the clatter of saucepans, the clinking of glasses, and silver moved about in preparing the repast. There was wafted upward a warm vapor which smelt so deliciously of roast meat, of the savory herbs used for sauces formed of various compounds, that the farmers, the chaplain, the bailiff, and every one else observed:

"What a feast there will be after mass is over!"

II.

TING-A-LING! Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

The midnight mass has begun. In the chapel of the castle, a miniature cathedral, with its vaulted roof and oaken wainscoting reaching to the ceiling, all the tapestries have been hung, all the tapers lighted. And what an illustrious assemblage! what toilets! Chief and first of all, in the sculptured stall which surrounds the chancel, sits the Sire de Trinquelague, arrayed in salmon-colored

taffeta, and about him all the noble lords who are his invited guests. Opposite, upon a velvet prie-Dieu, the dowager marchioness takes her place, robed in flame-colored brocade, and at her side the youthful Lady of Trinquelague, with a high lace head-dress, gauffered according to the latest fashion at the French court. Farther down sat two men clothed in black, with big pointed perruques and smooth-shaven faces. These were the bailiff, master Thomas Arnoton, and the petty-notary, master Ambroy, two dark notes in that bright-hued harmony of silks and figured damask. Below them sat fat major-domos, pages, huntsmen, stewards, and Dame Barbe herself, all her keys hanging at her side upon a fine silver ring. At the very end of the chapel, upon the benches, sat the lower servants and the farmers with their families; and, last of all, quite close to the door, which they opened and closed discreetly, came the lords of the kitchen, the scullions themselves, slipping out between the making of two sauces to catch what they could of the mass, bringing a whiff of the supper into the church, which wore a festive air, and was quite warm from the blaze of so many tapers. Was it the sight of those little white caps that so distracted the celebrant? More likely it was that bell of Garrigou's, that mad little bell, which tinkled at the foot of the altar with such infernal speed, and seemed to say every second: "We must hasten, hasten! The sooner we are through with this, the sooner we shall be seated at table." For it is a fact that every time that wicked little bell rang,

the chaplain forgot the mass and thought only of the supper. He fancied he saw those bustling kitchens, the fires burning like those of a forge, the warm vapor rising when a pot-lid was uncovered, and in that vapor two magnificent turkeys, stuffed, distended, and mottled with truffles. And he seemed to see long rows of little pages pass, carrying big platters from which arose a tempting steam, and with them he entered the great hall prepared for the feast. Oh, how delicious! There stands an immense table, gleaming with lights, laden with good things, peacocks dressed with their feathers, pheasants spreading their golden-brown wings, decanters the color of rubies, pyramids of fruit, shining amid green branches, and those marvellous fishes of which Garrigou had made mention (ah! was it Garrigou?) lying upon a bed of fennel, their scales as pearly as if they had just come out of the water, and a bunch of odorous herbs in the monsters' nostrils. So vivid is the vision of these marvellous things that it seems to Dom Balaguère as if all those wonderful platters were placed before him upon the embroidered altar-cloth; and two or three times instead of the *Dominus Vobiscum* he finds himself almost repeating the *Benedicite*. Except for these slight mistakes, the worthy man gets through the service very conscientiously, without skipping a line, or omitting a single genuflection; all goes very well, and the end of the first mass is reached, for you remember that on Christmas-eve the same celebrant must say three consecutive masses.

"One is finished," whispered the chaplain with a sigh of relief, and then, without losing a moment he motions to his clerk, the person he supposed to be his clerk, and —

Ting-a-ling! Ling-a-ling-a-ling!

The second mass is beginning, and with it the sin of Dom Balaguère. "Quick, quick, let us hasten," cries Garrigou's bell, with its little shrill voice; and this time the wretched officiant, succumbing completely to the demon of gluttony, plunges into his missal, and devours its pages with all the avidity of his over-excited appetite. He bows frenetically, rises again, hurriedly makes the sign of the cross, the necessary genuflections, and curtails all his gestures that he may finish the sooner. He scarcely extends his arm when he reaches the Gospel, nor beats his breast at the Confiteor. There is a race between himself and his clerk to see which one can go the fastest. Verses and responses rush headlong, tumbling over each other in their haste. Words are half pronounced through closed lips to save time, and nothing is heard save incomprehensible murmurs: —

"*Oremus ps . . . ps . . . ps . . .*"

"*Mea culpâ . . . pâ . . . pâ . . .*"

Like vintagers hastily crushing the contents of the vat, both of them plunge through the Latin of the mass, splashing fragments of it in every direction.

"*Dom . . . scum!*" says Balaguère.

"*Stutuo!*" Garrigou responds: and all the time

that accursed little bell is there, tinkling in their ears like the little round bells hung about post-horses to spur them to a gallop. You can easily imagine that with that sound jingling in the ears, a low mass is celebrated with all possible expedition.

"Two!" says the chaplain, panting, and without taking time to regain his breath, red in the face and dripping with perspiration, he tumbles over the altar-steps, and — Ting-a-ling! Ling-a-ling-a-ling! The third mass begins. It is only the work of a few moments now, and then the dining-hall! But, alas! as the moment of the feast approaches, the unfortunate Balaguère is possessed by a perfect frenzy of impatience and gluttonous longing. The vision becomes more clearly defined, the golden carps and roast turkeys seem to be there, in that very spot! He touches them, he — oh! *Dieu!* the platters are steaming, the fragrance of the wines ascends, and that little bell cries out as if mad, —

"Quicker, quicker, quicker!"

But how is it possible to go more quickly? His lips scarcely move. He no longer pronounces a word. Unless he should cheat the good Lord completely and rob Him of His mass? — and that is what the wretched man does. Yielding to one temptation after another, he begins by omitting a verse, then two more. The Epistle is too long, he does not end it; he merely skims the Gospel, omits the Credo, skips the Pater Noster, salutes the *Préface* at a distance, and with spasmodic jumps rushes

into eternal damnation, followed in each movement by the infamous Garrigou (*vade retro, Satanas*); the latter seconds his efforts with marvellous understanding, relieves him of his chasuble, turns over the leaves, two at a time, upsets the reading-desk, overturns the flagons, and rings that bell incessantly, ever more and more loudly and rapidly.

The terror depicted on the faces of all that congregation cannot be described! Compelled to follow the pantomime of the priest, in that mass of which they understood not a word, some rose whilst others knelt, some were seated whilst others remained standing, and the various phases of this singular celebration resulted, upon the benches, in absolute confusion, in a multitude of diverse attitudes. The Star of Bethlehem, in its course among the paths of heaven, moving towards the lowly manger, paled with fright as it beheld this shameful sight.

"The abbé goes too fast. One cannot follow him," murmurs the aged dowager, with a bewildered shake of her head-dress. Master Arnoton, his huge steel-rimmed spectacles astride his nose, fumbles in his prayer-book, seeking to discover where the deuce they are. But at heart all these good people, who are also anticipating the midnight feast, are not at all sorry that the mass proceeds at such break-neck speed; and when Dom Balaguère turns with radiant face towards his flock, crying with all his strength, "*Ite, missa est,*" all within the chapel answer, as with one voice, and

with a *Deo gratias* so overjoyed, so full of enthusiasm, that one might well believe himself seated already at table, and responding to the first toast of the Christmas-eve feast.

III.

FIVE minutes later that assemblage of noblemen were seated in the great hall, the chaplain in their midst. The castle, brilliantly lighted throughout, re-echoed with songs, cries, laughter, and uproar; the venerable Dom Balaguère planted his fork in the wing of a grouse, drowning remorse for his sin in draughts of good *vin du pape*, and fine meat-gravies. He ate and drank so much, this poor holy man, that he died during the night, after a terrible attack, and without having a single moment given him for repentance. When on the morrow he arrived in heaven, which was still ringing with rumors of the feasting of the preceding night, I leave you to imagine what was his reception.

"Depart from my sight, thou faithless Christian," said the sovereign Judge and Master of us all, "for thy sin is so great that it blots out the memory of a whole life of virtue. Ah! thou hast robbed me of a midnight mass. Even so! thou shalt atone for this with three hundred masses in its stead, and into Paradise thou shalt not enter till thou hast celebrated within thine own chapel, and on Christmas-eve, three hundred masses, which shall be in

the presence of all those who have sinned with thee and because of thy sin."

And that is the true legend of Dom Balaguère as it is told to this day in the land of olives. The castle of Trinquelague exists no longer now, but the chapel still rises erect as ever, by the summit of Mont Ventoux, amid a thicket of green oaks. The wind beats against its disjointed door, grass grows upon the threshold, birds nest about its altar and in the embrasures of its lofty windows whose colored panes disappeared long ago. And yet it seems that every year, as often as Christmas-eve returns, an unearthly light wanders among those ruins, and on their way to mass or to some Christmas-eve merrymaking, the country-folk see that spectral chapel illumined with invisible tapers, which burn in the open air and cannot be quenched even by the snow or the wind. You may smile at this if you wish, but a vine-dresser of the neighborhood, one Garrigue by name, and without doubt a descendant of Garrigou, assured me that one Christmas-eve, being a little light-headed after the revel of the evening, he was lost upon the mountain near Trinquelague, and this is what happened: up to one o'clock he saw nothing. All was silent, wrapped in darkness, inanimate. Suddenly, towards midnight, bells began to chime in the belfry above; it was an old, old carillon, that sounded as if ten leagues distant. Very soon, upon the ascent of the road, Garrigue saw torches flickering, waving to and fro, and borne by indistinct shadowy forms. Beneath

the chapel-porch footsteps were heard, and voices whispered,—

"Good-evening, Master Arnoton."

"Good-evening, good-evening, my children."

When all had entered, my vine-dresser, being very brave, approached with soft steps, and beheld through the broken door a singular spectacle. All the forms he had seen pass were arranged about the choir, in the ruined nave, as if the ancient benches still existed. Fair ladies in brocade, and lace-covered coifs, noble lords, embroidered from head to foot, peasants in flowered coats such as our grandsires wore were there, and all looked old, faded, dust-stained, and weary. From time to time night-birds, the habitual guests of the chapel, awakened by all the lights, hovered about these candles, whose flame ascended straight towards heaven, but seemed indistinct as if seen burning through a film; what amused Garrigue vastly was a certain personage with great steel-rimmed spectacles, who shook his high black perruque from time to time,—one of those birds clinging to it firmly, and flapping its wings noiselessly.

In the farther end of the chapel ~~was~~ a little old man, of infantile appearance, on his knees in the midst of the choir and shaking desperately a little mute, tongueless bell, while a priest, robed in faded gold-cloth, ~~went~~ went back and forth before the altar, reciting orisons of which none ~~heard~~ heard a single word. Surely this ~~was~~ was Dom Balaguère, reciting his third low mass.

THE POPE IS DEAD.

My childhood was passed in a large provincial town which is bisected by a river crowded with crafts, and full of stir and bustle; there I acquired while still young a fondness for voyages, and the passion for a nautical life. There is one especial corner of the quay, near a certain footbridge, Saint Vincent, it is called, and I never think of it, even to-day, without emotion. I remember that sign nailed to the end of a yard, "*Cornet, boats to let,*" the little staircase which went down even to the water, slippery and black from frequent wettings, the flotilla of little boats, freshly painted with gay colors, standing in a row at the foot of the ladder, rocking gently side by side, as if the charming names which decorated the stern in white letters, "*The Humming-bird,*" "*The Swallow,*" really lent the boats themselves new buoyancy.

Long oars glistening with white paint were drying against the wall, and among them walked Father Cornet with his paint-pot and big paint-brushes; his face was tanned, furrowed, and wrinkled with innumerable tiny depressions, like the river itself when an evening breeze springs up. Oh! Father Cornet! That worthy man was the tempter of my childhood, my joy and sorrow combined, my sin,

my remorse. How many crimes he led me to commit with those boats of his! I played truant from school, I sold my books. What would I not have sold for an afternoon's boating!

All my exercise-books at the bottom of the boat, my jacket off, my hat pushed back, a delicious breeze from the water fanning my hair, I pulled the oars firmly, my brows knitted in a frown, trying to cultivate the air of an old sea-dog. As long as I was in the town I kept to the middle of the river, at equal distance from either bank, where the old sea-dog might have been recognized! What a sense of triumph I felt, mingling with the movement of boats and rafts and floats loaded with wood, steamboats moving side by side, but never touching each other, though separated merely by a slender strip of foam! And then there were heavier boats which had to turn about to follow the current, while a host of smaller ones were obliged to move out of their way.

Suddenly the wheels of a steamboat would begin to churn the water around me; a huge shadow would loom above me; it was the bow of a boat loaded with apples. "Look out, youngster," a hoarse voice shouted; dripping with perspiration I tugged away, entangled in that current of life upon the river which mingled incessantly with the life of the street at every bridge and foot-bridge, while reflections from passing omnibuses darkened the water as I pulled my oars.

The current of the river was very strong about the arches of the bridge, and there were such

eddies, such whirlpools, among them that famous one to which the name of "*Death the Deceiver*" had been given. You can understand that it was no light matter for a child to pilot himself through that part of the river, pulling with the arms of a twelve-year-old, and no one to hold the rudder.

Sometimes I chanced to encounter the chain. As quickly as possible I would catch on to the end of the line of boats as it was tugged along, and letting my oars lie motionless, spread like wings about to alight, I allowed myself to be borne onward by that swift, silent movement which broke the river's surface into long ribbons of foam, while the trees along the bank and the houses upon the quay glided by us. A long, long distance ahead I could hear the monotonous turning of the screw, and on one of the boats, where a tiny thread of smoke was rising from a low chimney, I could hear a dog's bark; at such times I really fancied that I was aboard ship, and off for a long cruise.

Unfortunately, those meetings with that line of boats were rare. Most of the time I rowed and rowed, through the hours when the sun was hottest. Oh, that noonday sun beating straight down upon the river; I can still seem to feel it burning me! Everything glistened beneath those fiery rays. In that dazzling, sonorous atmosphere, which rested, a floating mass, above the waves vibrating with their every movement, with every dip of my oars, and from the fisherman's lines raised, dripping, from the water, I could see vivid gleams, as from some surface of polished silver. Then I would

close my eyes while I rowed on. From the energy of my efforts and the bound of the waves beneath my boat, I thought for the moment that I must be moving very rapidly, but upon raising my head to look, I was sure to see the same tree, the same wall facing me from the river-bank.

At last, completely exhausted, covered with perspiration, crimson with heat, I succeeded in leaving the city behind me. The din that came from bath-houses, washerwomen's boats, and boat-landings, grew fainter; the bridges were farther apart upon the widening river. A few suburban gardens and a factory chimney were reflected here and there. On the horizon the fringe of verdant islands fluttered, and now, unable to go any farther, I would pull close to the bank; there, in the midst of the reeds, full of buzzing life, overcome with the sun, fatigue, and that oppressive heat which rose from the water dotted with great yellow flowers, the old sea-dog would have an attack of the nose-bleed, which lasted for hours. My voyages always ended with that catastrophe; but then — one must not ask too much! Delightful enough these excursions were to me.

But the terrible part was the return, the moment when I must enter the house. No matter how fast I pulled the oars as I rowed homeward, I always arrived too late, and long after school was out. Impressed with the decline of day, the sight of the first few gaslights twinkling through the mist, the Soldiers' Retreat, my apprehension and remorse grew ever greater as I neared home. I envied the

people I met, tranquilly turning homeward. My head dull and heavy, full of the effects of sun and water, a murmur of sea-shells in my ears, I ran on, my face already reddening with the lie I was about to tell.

For on each occasion it was necessary to confront that terrible "Where were you?" which awaited me upon the threshold. It was that question which terrified me most, upon my home-coming. Standing upon the stairs I must answer upon the spur of the moment, and always have a story ready, something to say so astounding, so overwhelming, that surprise must cut short all further questioning. This left me time to enter, to regain breath. And for the sake of that moment I counted no cost too dear. I invented sinister events, revolutions, terrible things; one whole side of the city was burning, the railway bridge had collapsed, and fallen into the river! But the most startling of all my inventions was the following:

That evening I reached home very late. My mother, who had awaited me a whole hour, was on the watch, standing at the head of the stairway.

"Where have you been?" she exclaimed.

Tell me who can from what source children obtain the impish ideas that enter their heads. I had prepared no excuse, discovered none, — for I had returned too quickly. Suddenly a wild thought occurred to me. I knew that dear mother was very pious, most zealous of Roman Catholics, and I answered her with the breathless haste born of a deep emotion, —

"Oh, mamma! If you knew!"

"Knew what? Has anything happened?"

"The pope is dead."

"The pope is dead!" repeated my poor mother, and very pale she leaned against the wall.

I passed quickly into my own room, somewhat frightened at my success, and the enormity of the lie; and yet I had the courage to persist in it to the end. I still remember that subdued funereal evening; my father looked very grave, my mother was prostrated. They talked around the table in low voices. I kept my eyes lowered all the while; but my escapade had been so completely forgotten in the general sorrow that no one thought further of it.

Each one was pleased to call to mind some virtuous trait of that poor Pius IX.; then, by degrees, the conversation wandered, and reverted to Papal History. Aunt Rose began to speak of Pius VII., whom she recalled very well, having seen him when he passed through the Midi, in the back of a post-chaise, between gendarmes. They recalled that famous scene with the Emperor: *Comédiante!* . . . *tragédiante!* . . . For the hundredth time I heard them describe that terrible scene, ever with the same intonations, the same gestures, with all those stereotyped expressions which are a part of family tradition, as such bequeathed to the next generation, remaining with it, and like some monastic history, preserving all their puerilities and localisms.

Notwithstanding, the incident never appeared to me more interesting than upon this occasion.

With hypocritical sighs, with questionings, and an assumption of interest, I listened to every word, but all the time I was thinking to myself, —

"To-morrow morning, when they learn the pope is not dead, they will be so glad that no one will have the heart to scold me."

And as I thought of that, my eyes closed in spite of my efforts to keep them open, and visions of tiny boats, painted blue, appeared, and every nook along the Saône drowsing beneath the heat, and *argyronètes* darting forth their long feet in every direction, cutting the glassy water like diamond-points.

GASTRONOMIC SCENES.

BOUILLABAISSE.

WE were sailing along the Sardinian coast towards La Madeleine Island. It was an early morning excursion. Our oarsmen pulled slowly; leaning over the side of our boat, I looked at the sea, transparent as some spring, the sunlight diving to the very bottom. Medusæ and starfish sprawled among the seaweed. Big lobsters lay motionless, their long claws buried in the fine sand. All these might be seen at a depth of from eighteen to twenty feet, in a sort of aquarium, clear as crystal. At the bow of the boat a fisherman, standing with a long cleft reed in his hand, made a sign to the oarsmen, "Softly, softly!" and suddenly between the points of his fork he held a beautiful lobster suspended, spreading out its claws with a terrified movement, though still asleep. At my side another sailor let his line drop upon the water's surface in the wake of the boat, and brought in a haul of marvellous little fishes, which as they died were colored with a thousand bright and changing tints — a death-agony beheld through a prism.

The fishing ended, we landed among the high, gray rocks. A fire was quickly kindled, which

burned with a pale light in the bright sunshine; bread cut in big slices was placed upon small plates of red earthen-ware, and we sat about the soup-kettle, plates held out and nostrils distended. Was it because of the landscape, the sunshine, or that horizon of sea and sky? I have never eaten anything that tasted better than that lobster bouillabaisse. And afterwards that delightful siesta upon the sand, — a slumber filled with the lulling murmurs of the sea, while the wavelets, as if covered with innumerable shining scales, flash and glitter, even although the eyes are closed.

AIOLI.

ONE might have almost believed it to be the hut of some fisherman of Theocritus on the Sicilian coast; but the scene was merely in Provence, on the island of Camargue, the home of a river-keeper. A reed cabin, nets hanging upon the walls, guns, oars, apparently the tackle of a trapper, of one who hunts both on land and sea.

Before the open door, against which appeared a level landscape that seemed even vaster when the gale swept across it, the wife of the river-keeper was skinning some fine eels, which were still alive. The fish wriggled in the sunlight, and yonder, in the wan light of the squall, slender trees were bending like fugitives before the storm, the white surfaces of their leaves exposed. Bits of marsh,

gleaming here and there among the reeds, looked ike fragments of a broken mirror. Farther away a long and shining line bounded the horizon. It vas the Lake of Vaccarès.

Within the hut, a fire of twigs was burning brightly and crackling loudly; the keeper was eligiously pounding cloves of garlic in a mortar, and adding olive-oil drop by drop. Later we ate *aioli* upon our eels, seated on high stools before a small wooden table, in that snug little cabin where the largest space of all was reserved for the ladder which climbed to the loft; and one felt that beyond and about that tiny room lay the horizon swept by the gale, and hurrying flocks of wandering birds, — that all the encircling space might be measured by the bells of herds, of horses and cattle, their ringing at first loud and sonorous, and then sounding more faintly in the distance, till the last notes were lost, borne away in a gust of the mistral.

COUSCOUS.

It was in Algeria; we were visiting an aga of the plain of Chélif; in the great magnificent tent pitched for us before the aga's house we watched the night descend, clad in hues of half-mourning, dark violet at first, which deepened into the purple of a magnificent sunset; through the freshness of the evening a Kabyle candlestick of palm-wood was lighted in the centre of the half-open

tent, and the motionless flame from its branches attracted night insects, who hovered about it with a rustling of timid wings. Squatted upon mats we ate in silence; whole sheep, all dripping in butter, were brought in at the end of poles, honeyed pastry and perfumed confections followed, and, last of all, a great wooden platter, upon which were chickens in the golden semolina of couscous.

Meanwhile night had fallen. Over the neighboring hills the moon was rising, a tiny Oriental crescent, near which a solitary star nestled. Out of doors a big bonfire was flaming in front of the tent, surrounded by dancers and musicians. I recall a gigantic negro, quite naked but for the ancient tunic of the light regiment; he jumped about, causing long shadows to dart all over the tent. This cannibal dance, those small Arabian drums, rattling breathlessly when the beat was hastened, the sharp barking of jackals responding from every side of the plain, — all these things made the observer feel that he was in a savage country. However, in the interior of the tent, that refuge of these nomadic tribes, which resembles a motionless sail upon a waveless sea, the aga in his white woollen burnouses, seemed to me an apparition of primitive times, and as he gravely swallowed his couscous, I was wondering whether this national Arabian dish were not indeed that miraculous manna of the Hebrews of which so much is written in the Bible.

POLENTA.

THE Corsican coast, an evening in November. We landed beneath torrents of rain, in a part of the country which was completely deserted. Some charcoal-burners of Lucca made room for us at their fire. Then a native shepherd, a species of savage, clad entirely in goatskins, invited us to eat *polenta* in his hut. We entered, stooping and making ourselves as small as possible, a hovel where it was impossible to stand upright. In the centre some bits of green wood are kindling, between four blackened stones. The smoke which escapes from this fire mounts towards a hole cut in the top of the hut; then it spreads everywhere, driven about by the wind and rain. A tiny lamp, the *caleil* of Provence, blinks timidly in this stifling atmosphere. A woman and children appear from time to time, when the smoke clears a little, and hidden away somewhere a pig is heard grunting. Some rubbish left from a shipwreck is seen, a bench made of bits of vessels, a wooden packing-case with lettering upon it, the painted wooden head of a mermaid torn from some prow, the paint washed away by the sea-water.

Polenta is frightful stuff. The badly crushed chestnuts have a mouldy taste; it would seem that they had remained too long under the trees during heavy rains. The national *bruccio* followed the *polenta*, with a wild taste reminding one of vagrant

goats. In this spot the very climax of Italian poverty is seen. Neither house nor home. The climate is so favorable, a livelihood so easily gained! Nothing more is needed than a retreat for rainy-weather days. And what does it matter that the place is smoky, that the lamp burns dimly, when a house is regarded merely as a prison, and the only life that seems life at all is lived in the open sunshine?

A SEA-SIDE HARVEST.

WE had been travelling across the plain since morning in quest of the sea, which constantly eluded us, in those winding paths, headlands, and peninsulas which form the coast of Britanny.

From time to time a bit of marine blue would appear on the horizon, like a patch of sky, though deeper in tint and less stable; but advancing along the capricious meanderings of those roads, which made one call up a picture of ambuscades and Chouan warfare, the momentary glimpse of the sea was soon shut out again. At length we arrived at a tiny village, rustic and ancient in appearance, with gloomy streets as narrow as if built in Algerian fashion, and full of dung, geese, cattle, and swine. The houses resembled huts, with their low arched doorways, encircled with white and marked with lime crosses; the shutters were firmly fastened by long transverse bars, a custom seen only in windswept countries. And yet this little Breton town looked sheltered enough; the air was still, and even stifling. One might have believed himself twenty leagues inland. But suddenly, as we came upon the square in front of the church, we found ourselves enveloped in a dazzling light, felt

a tremendous sweep of air, and in our ears was the sound of illimitable waves. The ocean spread before us, the immense, infinite ocean, with its salt, fresh scent, and that strong breeze which rises from each bounding wave as the tide comes in. The village rose before us, nestling along the edge of the quay, the main street continued by the jetty, till it reached a tiny port where fishing-boats were moored. Close to the waves the belfry of the church rises like a sentinel, and around it, at the very extremity of this bit of the world, is the cemetery with its crosses leaning forward, its wild waste-grass, and its low, crumbling wall, against which stone benches are placed.

It would be difficult to find a more delightful or secluded place than this little village hidden away in the midst of the rocks, and interesting both as a pastoral and a bit of marine landscape. All of them fishers or laborers, the people of the neighborhood have a rude, scarcely prepossessing exterior. They do not invite you to be their guest, quite the contrary. But by degrees they yield to humanizing influences, and you are surprised to find, in spite of their rough welcome, that these people are simple-hearted and kindly. They resemble their land, that stubborn and rocky soil, so mineral that the roads even, when exposed to the sun, have a blackish hue, spangled with glittering particles of copper or of tin. This rocky soil along the coast, bare and exposed, looks wild, austere, and bristling. There are places where it has fallen down and caved in; there are perpendicular cliffs, grottos

hollowed out by the waves, which rush in engulfing them with a roar of waters. When the tide has gone out the rocks appear again, as far as the eye can see their monstrous backs emerging from the waves, glistening and white with foam, like gigantic cachalots run aground.

Only a few steps away from the water's edge, the scene affords a singular contrast; fields of wheat and lucerne, and vineyards extend, intersecting each other, separated by little walls as high as hedgerows, and green with brambles. The eye wearied even to dizziness at sight of those tall cliffs, those foaming breakers, those chasms into which one must descend with ropes fastened to the rocks, can find rest in the midst of the unbroken surface of the plain, and the friendlier, more familiar aspects of nature. The least detail of the rural scene is heightened when seen against the gray-green background of the sea, which presents itself at every turn of the road, and appears between the houses, through each cranny of a wall, and at the foot of the street. Even the crowing of the cock sounds clearer when surrounded by so much space. But what is most beautiful of all is the harvest-gathering at the sea-side, the golden stacks piled up so close to the blue waves, the threshing-floors where the rhythmic beat of the flail is heard, those groups of women on the steep rocks, seeking which way the wind blows, and winnowing the wheat between their outstretched hands with gestures of evocation. The grains rain down with a regular, brisk

movement, while the sea-breeze carries away the chaff and sets it whirling. This winnowing goes on upon the square in front of the church, upon the quay, as far as the jetty itself, where great fish-nets are spread out to dry, their meshes all entangled with aquatic plants.

Meanwhile there is another harvest at the foot of the rocks, in that neutral space invaded each day, and then left bare, by the tide. Here the seaweed is gathered. Each wave, as it breaks in foam upon the shore, leaves its traces in an undulating line of that marine vegetation known as *goëmon* or *varech*. When the wind blows, these algæ are carried the entire length of the beach with a rustling sound, and as far as the ebb of the sea leaves the rocks uncovered, these long, wet masses of sea-foliage are deposited everywhere. They are gathered into great heaps along the coast and piled up in dark-purplish stacks, which preserve all the hues of the waves, and the bizarre iris-tints of dead fishes and faded vegetation. When the stack is dry it is burned, and the soda is extracted from it.

This singular harvest is gathered by the bare-legged villagers at low tide among the innumerable limpid little pools which the ebbing waters leave behind; men, women, and children appear among the slippery rocks, armed with immense rakes. As they pass, terrified crabs attempt to escape, crawl into hiding-places, spreading out their claws, and shrimps with transparent bodies can scarcely be distinguished from the ruffled water. After the seaweed is obtained, it is gath-

ered into piles and loaded upon wagons to which yoked oxen are harnessed; they cross the hilly and broken ground laboriously, with heads bent. Wherever the eye chances to glance, these wagons are seen; sometimes in spots that seem almost inaccessible, which are reached only by abrupt paths, a man will appear leading by the bridle a horse loaded with drooping, dripping vegetation. You will also see children carrying upon sticks, crossed to form a handbarrow, their gleanings from this marine harvest.

All this forms a melancholy but fascinating picture. Terrified sea-gulls are seen circling about their eggs, and screaming. The menace of the sea is here, and what adds a final touch of solemnity to the scene is the silence which broods about everything, the same silence that marks a gleaning of the fruits of the soil, the silence of activity, full of the efforts of a people struggling against rebellious and parsimonious nature. A call to the cattle, a sharp "t-r-r-r" echoing through the grottos, is the only sound that is heard. The spectator seems to have encountered some Trappist community, one of those monastic brotherhoods which labor in the open air with a vow of everlasting silence imposed upon them. Those who are directing the work never look about, even to so much as glance at you when you pass; the cattle alone fix their great, placid eyes upon you. And yet this is not a sad people, and when the Sabbath comes they know how to make merry, and dance their old Breton dances. Of an evening, towards eight o'clock, they assemble at

the end of the quay, before the church and the cemetery. That word "cemetery" has a dismal sound, but the spot itself, if you should see it, looks anything but dismal. Not a boxwood-tree, nor a single yew, nor monuments of marble; nothing here is formal or solemn. Only crosses are seen, the same names repeated again and again as in all small settlements where the inhabitants are closely allied. The tall grass grows everywhere with equal favor, and the walls are so low that the children can climb over them in their play, and upon the day of an interment the spectator from without can see the kneeling mourners within.

At the foot of those low walls the aged come to sit in the sun, spinning or dozing, upon one side of them that wild and silent enclosure, in front of them the eternal and restless sea.

And there, too, the young gather to dance of a Sabbath evening. When the light gleams faintly above the waves along the jetty, groups of youths and maids approach. Rings are formed, and a shrill voice rises, at first alone, repeating a line whose rhythm is easily caught, and summoning the chorus: —

"C'est dans la cour du Plat-d'Étain."

All the voices repeat together, —

"C'est dans la cour du Plat-d'Etain."

The roundel grows livelier, one catches glimpses of white caps, their flaps whirling about like butter-

flies' wings. Almost invariably the wind snatches and bears off half of the words, —

". . . perdu mon serviteur . . .
. . . portera mes couleurs . . ."

the song all the more naïve and charming, because one catches only fragments of it, with those odd elisions so common in folk-songs set to dance-tunes with more regard for the rhythm of the measure than thought for the meaning of the words. With no other light than the feeble ray of the moon, the dance seems fantastic. All is gray, black, or white, in that neutrality of tint which accompanies things dreamed about, not seen. By degrees, as the moon rises, the crosses in the cemetery, especially that of High Calvary, which is at one side, lengthen till they seem to touch the ring of dancers and mingle with them. At last ten o'clock rings. The dancers separate. Each returns homeward, along the lanes of the little village, which wears a strange aspect at this moment, with its broken steps of outer staircases, roof corners, and a confused mass of bent, tumble-down, open sheds, black with the dense gloom of night.

We pass along old walks, just grazed by fig trees, and, as we walk on, crushing underfoot the empty chaff from the winnowed wheat, the scent of the sea comes to us, mingling with the warm perfume of the harvest, and the breath of cattle asleep in the stables.

The house where we are living is in the country,

a short distance from the village. As we return, we can see along the road, just above the hedges, beacons gleaming from all parts of the peninsula, a flash-light, a revolving, a stationary one; and as we cannot now see the ocean, all these watch-towers rising above yonder black reefs seem lost in this peaceful country.

THE EMOTIONS OF A YOUNG RED PARTRIDGE.

YOU know that partridges travel in flocks, and make their nests together in the hollows of the fields, so that they may be able to disappear at the least alarm, an entire flock dispersing like a handful of wheat scattered by the sower. Our own covey is large in numbers, and merry; our home is upon the plain on the border of a great forest, well sheltered on two sides, and full of booty. Ever since I knew how to run, being well fed and full-fledged, my life was a very happy one. But one thing disturbed me somewhat, and that was the famous beginning of the chase; our parents began to talk of it among themselves, in whispers; a veteran of our company would tell me on such occasions, —

"Do not fear, Rouget," — I was named Rouget because of my bill, and my legs the color of the red berries of the rowan, — "do not fear, Rouget. I will take you with me the day the hunt begins, and I am sure no ill will befall you." He was an old fellow, very sly, and still nimble, although he had the horseshoe already marked upon his breast, and a few white feathers here and there. When he was young he received a grain of lead in one wing,

making it rather heavy, and he looks about him more than once before flying, takes his time about it, and gets out of harm's way. He had often led me as far as the entrance of the woods, where there stands an odd little house, nestling close to chestnut-trees, silent as an empty burrow, and always closed.

"Look well at that house, little one," said the old fellow one day; "when you see smoke rising from the roof, when the shutters and the door are opened, it bodes ill for us."

I placed myself completely in his charge, knowing that this was not the first hunting-season for him.

And, in fact, the very next morning, at break of day, I heard some one calling very softly amid the furrows, —

"Rouget, Rouget!"

It was the old fellow himself. His eyes had an extraordinary expression.

"Come quickly," he said, "and do exactly as I do."

I followed him, still half asleep, gliding along the clumps of turf, not flying and scarcely hopping, but creeping like a mouse. We reached the border of the woods, and in passing I saw smoke ascending from the chimney of the little house; the windows were no longer closed, the door stood wide open, and before it were huntsmen, thoroughly equipped for the chase, and surrounded by dogs bounding about them. As we passed, one of these huntsmen exclaimed, —

"We will scour the plain this morning, and leave the woods until after dinner."

Then I understood why my old comrade had first of all sought a spot where we would be sheltered. Nevertheless, my heart was jumping quickly, especially when I thought of our poor friends.

Suddenly, just as we passed the outskirts of the woods, the dogs began to gallop in our direction.

"Keep close to the ground, close to the ground," said my old comrade, dropping to the earth; and at the same moment, ten paces from us a terrified quail spread out his wings, opened wide his beak, and flew, uttering a frightened cry. I heard a formidable sound, and we were enveloped in dust which had a strange odor, and was white and warm although the sun had scarcely risen. I was so frightened that I was no longer able to run. Fortunately, we had entered the woods. My comrade hid behind a small oak, and I took my position near him, and there we remained in hiding, peeping through the leaves.

In the fields there was a terrific firing. At every shot I closed my eyes, quite dazed; when at last I resolved to open them, I saw before me the plain, vast and bare; dogs were running about, prying in the grass, among the sheaves, running about as if mad. Behind them came the hunters, cursing and shouting. Their guns flashed in the sunlight. One moment, in a tiny cloud of smoke, I fancied I could see, although there was not a single tree in the neighborhood, something flying that looked like scattered leaves. But the old cock assured me

that what I saw was feathers, and in fact, a hundred feet in front of us we saw a superb young gray partridge fall in the furrows, his bleeding head upturned. When the sun was high and the heat intense, the firing suddenly paused. The huntsmen returned towards the little house, where a fine fire of twigs was soon burning. They talked among themselves, guns slung across their shoulders, arguing about their shots, while the dogs followed close at their heels, exhausted, their tongues hanging.

"They are going to dine," said my companion; "let us do the same."

And we entered a field of buckwheat which is close to the woods, a big field dark in places, white in others, partly in flower, partly gone to seed, and scented like almond. Beautiful pheasants with reddish-brown plumage were pecking there as well as ourselves, dropping their red crests lest they should be seen. Ah! they were not so valiant as of old. As they ate they asked us for news, and wished to learn whether any of their kin had fallen. Meanwhile the meal of the sportsmen, at first silent, became more and more boisterous; we could hear glasses clinking and the corks of bottles flying. My old comrade thought it was time to seek our covert again.

At this hour the forest seemed as if asleep. The little pool where the roebucks come to drink was not troubled by a single tongue lapping the water. Not even the snout of a rabbit in the wild thyme of the warren. Only a mysterious shudder

was felt, as if every leaf, every grass-blade, sheltered an existence that was endangered. These hunted ones of the forest have so many hiding-places in burrows, thickets, fagots, and brushwood; and then there are those ditches, those tiny ditches in the woods, that hold the water so long after a rain. I confess that I would gladly have sought one of those holes, but my companion preferred not to remain in hiding, but to have the country before him, able to look far and wide in the open air. It was lucky for us, for soon the huntsmen arrived in the woods.

Oh! that first shot in the forest, that fire which pierced the leaves like an April hail-storm, denting the bark of the trees. Never shall I forget it. A rabbit scampered across the road, tearing off tufts of grass with his paws. A squirrel tumbled down a chestnut tree, the still green chestnuts tumbling with him. The heavy flight of some big pheasants was heard, and a tumult ensued in the low branches, among the dry leaves, at the shock of this fire, which startled, awoke, and frightened every living thing in the woods. Field-mice ran out of their holes. A stag-beetle crawled from a crevice in the tree where we were crouching, and rolled his big stupid eyes, fixed with terror. Blue dragon-flies, humble-bees, butterflies, tiny creatures of all sorts fled terrified in every direction. A little cricket with scarlet wings even went so far as to crawl close to my beak, but I was too frightened myself to take advantage of its terror.

But my old comrade remained calm. Constantly

attentive to the firing and the barking of the dogs, when they came nearer he would signal to me, and we would withdraw a little, beyond reach of the dogs and well-hidden in the foliage. And yet, on one occasion I really believed that we were lost. The passage we must cross was guarded at every step by a hunter lying in wait. On one side stood a big, determined, black-whiskered fellow, whose every movement set a mass of old iron ringing; he was armed with a hunting-knife, cartridge-pouch, powder-box, and with high-buttoned gaiters reaching to his knees, making him look even taller; on the other side a little old man leaning against a tree, tranquilly smoking a pipe, blinking his eyes as if he wished to doze. He did not frighten me in the least; it was the big fellow who terrified me.

"You know nothing at all, Rouget," said my comrade, with a smile; and advancing fearlessly with outspread wings, he flew past, almost touching the legs of the terrible black-whiskered huntsman.

And the fact is, the poor man was so encumbered with his hunting-rig, so absorbed in admiring himself from top to toe, that when he aimed his gun, we were already beyond his range. Ah! if the huntsman only knew, when he thinks himself alone in a corner of the woods, how many tiny, fixed eyes are watching from every bush, how many tiny, pointed bills are trying to hold in their laughter at his awkwardness!

We went on and on. Having nothing better to do than to follow my comrade, my wings fluttered

to every motion of his own, and folded silently when he alighted. I can still see every place we passed — the warren, pink with heath, full of burrows at the foot of the yellow trees, and then that great curtain of oaks where I seemed to see death concealed everywhere, the little green lane where Mother Partridge had so often walked with her tiny brood in the May sunshine, where we hopped about, pecking at the red ants that clambered up our legs, and where we met snobbish little pheasants, dull as chickens, who would not play with us.

I see, as if in a dream, that little lane at the moment a roe would cross it, erect upon her slender legs, her eyes wide open, her body ready to spring. And then there was that pool we visited in parties of fifteen to thirty, all of the same flock, passing across the plain in a minute to drink the water of the spring and splash its droplets which rolled down our lustrous plumage. In the midst of this pond there was a clump of young alders, that formed quite a thicket, and upon that little island we took refuge. The dogs must have had a keen scent to have come there in search of us. We had been there a moment when a roebuck arrived dragging three legs along, and leaving a red track upon the moss behind him. It was such a sad sight that I hid my head beneath the leaves; but I could hear the wounded animal drinking in the pool, panting and consumed with fever.

The sun was setting. The firing sounded at a distance now, the shots few and far between. At length there was silence. The day's hunt was over.

Then we returned very softly across the plain for news of our covey. As we passed by the little wooden house, I saw a horrible sight.

On the edge of a ditch, russet-coated hares and little, gray, white-tailed rabbits were lying side by side. Their tiny paws, bent together in death, seemed to beg for mercy; their dim eyes seemed about to weep; we saw red partridges also, and gray ones, who had a horseshoe marked upon their breasts, like my comrade, and young ones of this year's brood, who like myself still had down upon their wings. Do you know any sadder sight in the world than a dead bird? What seems more alive than the wings of a bird? But to see them folded and cold causes one to shudder. There was also a huge roebuck lying there; it was a magnificent animal, and lay there quietly, as if it had fallen asleep, its little red tongue outstretched as if about to lick.

The huntsmen too were there, leaning over all this slaughtered booty, counting and drawing towards their game-bags broken wings and bleeding legs, with no respect for those wounds, still fresh. The dogs, tied-up to go back, were scowling and pointing, as if ready to spring again into the thicket.

Oh! while that great sun was sinking yonder, as they went off wearily, casting long shadows upon the clods and the paths wet with the evening-dews, how I cursed, how I hated them, men and brutes, that entire band. Neither my companion nor myself had the heart for piping our usual farewell note to the departing day.

Upon our way we came across more unfortunate little beasts, slain by a chance bullet, and lying there, abandoned to ants and field-mice, their muzzles full of dust; we saw magpies and swallows, suddenly struck in their flight; they lay head up, upon the ground, and their little claws curled stiffly upward, while the night descended swiftly, — an autumn night, clear, cold, and damp. And more heart-rending than aught else were the cries which rose from the outskirts of the woods, from deep in the meadow, from the willows fringing the river, calls that were uttered far and wide, sad anxious cries which no call answered.

THE MIRROR.

In the North, on the bank of the Niemen, appeared one day a little creole, fifteen years of age, pink and white as the blossoms of the almond tree. She had come from the land of humming-birds, and a breath of love wafted her hither. True, the people of her island had said to her, "Do not go. It is cold on the continent. When winter comes it will kill you." But the little creole did not believe there was such a thing as winter, and she did not know what cold was except as she had tasted it in sherbets; besides, she was in love, and had no fear of death. And so it happened that she landed northward, among the fogs of the Niemen, with her fans, her hammock, mosquito-nettings, and a gilded, latticed cage, filled with the birds of her country.

When old Father North saw this island-flower the South had sent him in a sunbeam, his heart stirred within him for pity; and as he thought that the cold would make but a single mouthful of the maiden and her humming-birds, he quickly lighted his great yellow sun, and disguised himself in summer's garment to receive the strangers. And so the creole was deceived, and she mistook this

northern heat, so harsh and oppressive, for constant warmth, and its dark evergreen for the verdure of spring-time, and hanging her hammock in the park between two fir trees she swung and fanned herself all day long.

"It is very warm in the North," she said with a smile. But one thing troubled her. Why in this strange country have the houses no verandas? Why those thick walls, those carpets and heavy hangings? Those great porcelain stoves, and huge piles of wood heaped up in the yards, those blue fox-skins, lined cloaks, and furs laid away at the bottom of wardrobes, — what are all these things for? Poor child, she will soon learn.

One morning, on awaking, the little creole feels a sudden chill pass through her. The sun has disappeared, and from the darkened overhanging sky, which seems to have descended upon the earth during the preceding night, flakes are falling, forming a woolly covering, white and silent as that which falls from the cotton tree. Winter is come! Winter is come! The wind whistles, the stoves roar. In their big cage with its gilded lattice, the humming-birds chirp no longer. Their tiny wings, blue, rose-hued, ruby-red, and sea-green, are motionless now. It is pitiful to see them huddling against each other, their bodies benumbed and swollen with the cold, — such slender beaks, and eyes like pin-heads. Yonder, in the park, frost has eaten into the hammock, and it, too, shivers with the cold. The branches of the pine tree are sheathed in a covering that looks like spun glass. The little creole

feels the cold, and does not care to venture out of doors.

Curled up snugly beside the fire, like one of her birds, she whiles away the hours making sunshine of her memories. In the great fireplace a bright fire burns, and in its flames she seems to see all the scenes of her native land, the great quays basking in sunshine, the dripping sugar-cane, and the floating, golden dust of grains of maize; then the afternoon siesta, the light blinds and straw mattings, — and those starlit evenings, with fire-flies, and millions of tiny wings buzzing among the flowers, and the tulle meshes of mosquito-netting.

And while she dreams at the fireside, the winter days follow each other, growing shorter and gloomier. Every morning a dead humming-bird is picked up in the cage; soon there are but two of them left, two tufted bits of green plumage that lean, bristling, against each other in a corner of the cage. That morning the little creole herself was unable to rise. Like a Turkish felucca lodged fast in Northern ice-fields, she is griped and paralyzed by the cold. The day is sombre, the chamber dreary. The frost has curtained the window-panes with a heavy covering, like lustreless silk; the city itself seems dead, and through the silent streets the steam snow-plough wheezes dolefully. The creole, lying in bed, tries to divert herself by watching the flash from the spangles of her fan, and passes hours gazing at herself in the mirrors of her native land, fringed with tall Indian plumes.

Growing ever shorter, ever gloomier, the winter days follow each other. Surrounded by her lace curtains, the little creole droops, is wretched. What saddens her most of all is to find that from her bed she cannot see the fire. It seems to her that she has lost her country a second time. From time to time she asks, "Is there a fire in the room?" "Why, of course there is, little one. The fireplace is aflame! Don't you hear the logs crackling, the fir-cones bursting? — Oh, look, look!" But though she leans forward, the flames are too far away for her; she cannot see them, and the thought renders her disconsolate. But one evening, as she lies there, pensive and pale, her head barely touching her pillow, and her eyes ceaselessly directed towards that beautiful invisible flame, her beloved approaches her bedside, and lifts one of the mirrors lying upon the bed: "You want to see the flame, *mignonne?* Well, then, wait a moment," and kneeling before the fire, he tries to hold the mirror so that she shall receive a reflection of the magic flame. "Can you see it?" "No! I see nothing." — "How now?" "I cannot see it yet." Then suddenly receiving full upon her face a flash of light that envelops her, "Oh, I see it!" cries the creole, overjoyed, and she dies with a smile on her lips, two tiny flames leaping from the depths of her eyes.

THE BLIND EMPEROR, OR A JOURNEY IN BAVARIA IN SEARCH OF A JAPANESE TRAGEDY.

I.

COLONEL VON SIEBOLDT.

In the spring of 1866, Colonel Sieboldt, a Bavarian in the service of Holland, well known in the scientific world through his charming works upon the Japanese flora, came to Paris to submit to the Emperor a vast project for an international association for the exploitation of that marvellous Nipon-Jepon-Japon (Land of the Rising Sun), where he had resided for thirty years. While awaiting an audience in the Tuileries, the illustrious traveller, who had remained decidedly Bavarian in spite of his sojourn in Japan, passed his evenings in a little beer-shop of the Faubourg Poissonnière, in company with a young lady of Munich who travelled with him, and whom he introduced as his niece. There it was I first ran across him. The physiognomy of this tall old man, erect and sturdy in spite of his sixty-two years, his long white beard, his interminable fur-lined coat, its button-hole decked with ribbons of various colors presented by divers academies of science, his foreign manner, in which

there were at once timidity and boldness, his whole appearance was sufficient to cause all eyes to turn in his direction whenever he entered. The colonel would seat himself solemnly, and draw from his pocket a big black radish; then the little lady who accompanied him, decidedly German in the cut of her short skirt, her fringed shawl, and her little tourist's-hat, would proceed to cut that radish in thin slices after the fashion of her country, cover it with salt, and offer it to her "*ounclé*," as she called him in her thin voice, as small as a mouse's, and both of them would begin to nibble, sitting *vis-à-vis*, tranquilly, and with perfect simplicity, without the slightest suspicion that to behave in Paris exactly as if in Munich might cause ridicule. Truly this was an original and sympathetic couple, and it did not take long for us to become great friends. The worthy man, perceiving how well inclined I was to listen when he talked of Japan, asked me to revise his Memoir, and I hastened to accept the task, prompted as much by regard for this aged Sinbad as by the desire to plunge more deeply into the study of that beautiful country, for which he had communicated his own love to me. This labor of revision was by no means a light one. The entire Memoir was written in the same bizarre French that Colonel Sieboldt spoke.

"*Si j'aurais des actionnaires, — si je réunirais des fonds*," and those blunders of pronunciation which made him say regularly, "*Les grandes boites de l'Asie*," for "*Les grandes poëtes de l'Asie*," and "*le Chabon*" for "*le Japon*." Add to this, many

of his phrases were fifty lines in length, without a period, a single comma, nowhere a breathing-place, — and yet the whole so well arranged in the brain of the author that to omit a single word seemed to him impossible; if it occurred to me to cut out a line, he very quickly transferred it to another place.

Notwithstanding, this terrible man was so interesting with his *Chabon* that I forgot to be tired while I labored, and when the letter arrived granting an audience, the Memoir was already fairly well in shape.

Poor old Sieboldt! I can still see him walking towards the Tuileries, all his crosses upon his breast, in his uniform with that fine colonel's coat of scarlet and gold, which he brought from his trunk only upon great occasions. In spite of his oft-repeated "brum, brum," as he straightened his tall figure again and again, as I felt his arm tremble against mine, and noted the unusual pallor of his nose, the fine, big nose of a scientist, crimsoned by study and the beer of Munich, I knew that he was deeply moved. That evening, when I saw him again, he was triumphant. Napoleon III. had received him between two doors, listened for five minutes, and dismissed him with that favorite phrase, "I will see. I will consider." As result of which, the naïve Japanese was already talking of renting the first story of the Grand Hôtel, writing to the journals, and issuing a prospectus. I had great difficulty in making him understand that his Majesty's reflections might require some time, and that meanwhile it would be better to return to

Munich, where Parliament had just voted funds for the purchase of his great collection. My remarks finally convinced him, and on his departure he promised me, in return for the trouble I had taken with his famous Memoir, a Japanese tragedy of the sixteenth century, entitled *The Blind Emperor*, a precious masterpiece, absolutely unknown in Europe, and translated by him expressly for his friend Meyerbeer. The master was about to write the music for the choruses at the time of his death. You perceive that the gift the good man wished to make me was a valuable one.

Unfortunately, some days after his departure, war broke out in Germany, and I heard nothing more of my tragedy. The Prussians having invaded Würtemberg and Bavaria, it was quite natural, in his patriotic excitement and the confusion attending an invasion, that the colonel should have forgotten my *Blind Emperor*. But I thought of it myself more than ever, and — I confess — partly stirred by a longing for my Japanese tragedy, partly moved by curiosity to see what war and invasion at close range were like, — O ye gods! how the horror of it all remains in my memory, — I decided one fine morning to set out for Munich.

II.

SOUTH GERMANY.

TALK of your phlegmatic nations! In the midst of war and burning beneath that intense

August sun, all the country beyond the Rhine, from the bridge of Kehl to Munich itself, — how tranquil and cold it all seemed. Through the thirty windows of the Würtemberg car, which took me slowly, sluggishly across Swabia, landscape after landscape was unrolled, mountains, ravines, masses of rich verdure, which suggested the presence of refreshing streams. Upon many a slope which would disappear as the train moving on passed through some wind of the road, peasant-girls were seen, standing stiffly in the midst of their cattle, clad in red petticoats and velvet bodices, and the trees around them were so green that one might almost fancy he saw a miniature landscape taken from one of those tiny fir-boxes fragrant with the resinous odors of Northern forests. Now and then we would see a dozen foot-soldiers, clad in green, covering step in a meadow, heads erect, legs raised, bearing their guns as if they were cross-bows, perhaps the army of some Nassau prince. Sometimes other trains passed, as slowly as our own, loaded with big boats, where the Würtemberg soldiery, huddled as if in some allegoric chariot, sang three-part barcarolles as they fled before the Prussians. There were halts at every refreshment-station, and one saw major-domos with rigid smiles, and those fat, good-natured faces, napkins tucked under their chins, standing before enormous hunches of meat, served with sweetmeats; then came the royal Park of Stuttgard, full of coaches, toilets, cavalcades, waltz-music playing about the fountains, quadrilles while a battle was in progress at Kissingen. Really,

when I recall all this, and think of what I saw four years later in that same mouth of August, locomotives madly rushing no one knew where, as if the great sun itself had bewitched their boilers, railroad cars pulling up on the very battlefield, rails cut, trains in distress, France reduced day by day, as the Eastern Line grew shorter and shorter, — all along the route abandoned tracks, and a dismal assemblage of railway-stations, which were left in their loneliness, in a deserted land full of wounded men, forgotten like so much luggage — I begin to believe that the war between Prussia and the Southern States was but a sham war after all, and that, in spite of all which could be told us, the German wolves do not devour each other.

To see Munich was to be convinced of this. The evening when I arrived, a beautiful Sunday evening, the sky thick with stars, all the city was out of doors. A vague, joyous rumor was floating in the air, as indistinct beneath the light, as dust raised by the footsteps of all these promenaders. In the cool, vaulted beer-cellars, in the beer-gardens where colored lanterns swayed to and fro with a dim light, everywhere was heard, mingling with the noise of the covers of beer-mugs dropping heavily, the sound of brass and wood instruments, uttering triumphal notes. It was in one of these harmonic beer-shops I discovered Colonel Sieboldt, seated with his niece, before that everlasting black radish of his.

At a side-table, the Minister of Foreign Affairs was drinking bock in company with the king's

uncle. All around us were seated the worthy citizens of Munich with their families, officers in spectacles, students wearing little caps, red, blue, and sea-green; all were grave and silent, and listened religiously to Herr Gungl's orchestra, as they watched the clouds of smoke rising from their pipes, with no more concern about Prussia than if it did not exist. The colonel seemed slightly disturbed when he saw me, and I believe that he lowered his voice perceptibly when he addressed me in French. Around us were whispers of "*Frantzose! Frantzose!*" and I could feel the ill-will every glance conveyed. "Let us go," said Colonel Sieboldt, and once we were outside, his smile was as frank as of old. The worthy man had not forgotten his promise, but he had been very much absorbed in the arrangement of his Japanese collection, which he had sold to the State. That was the reason why he had not written. As for my tragedy, it was at Wurtzbourg, in the hands of Frau von Sieboldt, and to reach that place it was necessary to obtain a special permission from the French Embassy, for the Prussians were approaching Wurtzbourg, and it was now very difficult to gain entry. But I had so strong a desire to obtain my *Blind Emperor* that I would have gone to the Embassy that very evening had I not feared that M. de Trévise would have gone to bed.

III.

IN A DROSKY.

EARLY the following morning, the landlord of the *Grappe-Bleue* persuaded me to climb to the top of one of those small conveyances which stand in hotel-courtyards, and can always be hired by travellers who wish to be shown the curiosities of the city, from which equipage monuments and avenues appear exactly as if you had encountered them upon the pages of a guide-book. On this occasion the city was not to be shown to me, but I was to be conducted to the French Embassy, "Frantzsosiche Ambassad!" the hotel-keeper repeated twice. The coachman, a little man in blue livery, a gigantic hat upon his head, seemed much astonished at the new destination of his fiacre, or his *droschken*, as they call it in Munich. But I was even more astounded than he when I saw him turn his back upon the noble quarter where we were, and enter a poorer part of the city, which for a long distance was lined with factories, working-men's lodgings, and tiny gardens; then he passed beyond the gates and out of the city.

"*Ambassad Frantzsosiche?*" I asked uneasily from time to time.

"*Ya, Ya,*" answered the little man, and we rolled on and on. I would have gladly received further information, but what the deuce was to be done?

My guide could not speak French, and I myself at this epoch knew only two or three phrases of the German language, very elementary ones at that, which related merely to bread, bed, meat, and had naught to do with such words as "ambassador." And even these few words I could only deliver set to music, and this is the reason: —

Some years before, with a comrade almost as mad as myself, I had travelled across Alsace, Switzerland, and the Duchy of Baden, — a real *colporteur's* journey, knapsacks strapped upon our shoulders, striding across the country, a dozen leagues at a stretch, turning aside from the cities, of which we wished to see nothing more than the gates, following each tiny by-way, never knowing whither it would lead us. Often the result would be that we had to pass a night, unexpectedly, in the open field, or in some barn whose roof was the sky, but what made our journeys still more eventful was the fact that neither of us knew a single word of German. By the aid of a little pocket-dictionary purchased as we were passing through Basle, we had been able to construct a few extremely simple phrases, quite naïve in character, such as "*Vir vollen trinken Bier*," "We want beer to drink," "*Vir vollen essen Käse*," "We want some cheese to eat." Unfortunately, though they may not seem at all complex to you, it cost us much labor to retain these accursed phrases. We did not, in the comedian's language, "have them at our tongue's end." Then it occurred to us that we would set them to music, and the little air we had

composed was so well adapted to the purpose that the words entered our heads along with the notes, and it was impossible to utter these phrases without dragging along the music. It was indeed a sight, to see the expression on the face of the Baden inn-keepers, when of an evening we would enter the great hall of the Gasthaus, and immediately our knapsacks were unbuckled chant in resonant voices: —

"Vir vollen trinken Bier (repeat),
Vir vollen, ya, vir vollen,
Ya!
Vir vollen trinken Bier."

Since that time I have become most proficient in German; I have had so many opportunities to learn the language. My vocabulary has been enriched by a host of expressions and phrases; but I *say* them, I sing them no longer! Ah, no! I have not the least wish to sing them.

But to return to my *droschken*.

We went at a slow trot down an avenue bordered with trees and white houses. Suddenly the coachman paused. "*Da*," he said pointing out to me a little white house, hidden among the acacias, which seemed to me somewhat secluded and quiet for an embassy. Three copper knobs, one above the other, gleamed in a corner of the wall beside the door. I pulled the first one I chanced to touch; the door opened, and I entered an elegant and comfortable vestibule, flowers and carpets everywhere. On the staircase half a dozen Bavarian

chambermaids came running to answer my ring, standing in line, with that awkward appearance of birds without wings that characterizes all the women beyond the Rhine.

I inquired, "*Ambassad Frantzosiche?*" They made me repeat this twice, and then began to laugh, so loudly that they shook the banister. I returned to my coachman furious, and endeavored to make him understand, with an abundance of gestures, that he was mistaken, and the Embassy was not there. "*Ya, ya,*" responded the little man, without the slightest show of emotion, and we returned toward Munich.

I must believe that our ambassador then at Munich changed his domicile very frequently, or else my coachman, unwilling to depart from custom with regard to his *droschken*, was determined I should see, if possible, the city and its environs. At all events, our entire morning was passed in driving over Munich in every direction, in search of that fantastic Embassy. After two or three attempts I ended by refusing to descend from the carriage. The coachman went in search, returned, stopped in certain streets, and appeared to ask information. I allowed myself to be driven on, no longer occupied except in looking about me. What a wearisome, cold city, this Munich, with its great avenues, its rows of palaces, its over-sized streets, where every footstep resounds, its open-air museum of Bavarian celebrities, who seem so very dead as one glances at their effigies in white marble.

What colonnades, arcades, frescos, obelisks,

Greek temples, propylæa, with distichs in golden letters upon their frontons! So much effort at grandeur; but one cannot help feeling the emptiness and pomposity of it all, finding at the end of each avenue a triumphal arch where the horizon alone passes, and porticos open to the blue sky. So I picture to myself those imaginary cities, Italy mingling with Germany, where Musset parades the incurable ennui of his Fantasio and the solemn, stupid, bewigged head of the Prince of Mantua.

This drive in the *droschken* lasted five or six hours, at the end of which time the coachman brought me back triumphantly to the courtyard of the *Grappe-Bleue*, cracking his whip, quite proud to have shown me Munich. As for the Embassy, I finally found it two streets from my hotel; but it did me little good, for the chancellor was unwilling to give me a passport for Wurtzbourg. It seems that we were not very favorably regarded in Bavaria at this time; it would have been dangerous for a Frenchman to venture beyond the outposts. I was consequently obliged to wait in Munich until Frau von Sieboldt should find occasion to send me the Japanese tragedy.

IV.

THE BLUE COUNTRY.

SINGULAR fact! These worthy Bavarians, who bore us so much ill-will because we did not espouse their cause in this war, felt not the least animosity

towards the Prussians, — neither shame at defeat, nor hatred for their conqueror. "They are the finest soldiers in the world," the landlord of the *Grappe-Bleue* said to me with a certain pride the morning of Kissingen, and that was the general sentiment in Munich. In the cafés there was a rush for the Berlin newspapers, and side-splitting laughter at the pleasantries of *Kladderadatsch*, those heavy Berlin jests, as ponderous as that famous pile-hammer of the Krupp factory, which weighs fifty thousand kilogrammes. As every one was certain that the Prussians would soon enter the city, all were disposed to receive them well. The beer-shops laid in special supplies of sausages and meat-balls, and houses in the city began to prepare chambers for the officers.

Only the museums manifested some uneasiness. One day, upon entering the Pinakothek, I saw that the walls were bare, and the guardians of the place busied in nailing away the paintings in great packing-cases, ready to be sent to the South. It was feared that the conquerors, extremely scrupulous regarding personal property, would not be quite so respectful of the collections of the State, and of all the museums of the city, only Colonel Sieboldt's remained open. In his capacity as a Dutch officer, decorated with the Eagle of Prussia, the colonel felt assured that none would dare touch his collection, and while awaiting the arrival of the Prussians he merely walked back and forth in full uniform through the three long halls which the king had given him, fronting upon the court-garden, a sort

of Palais-Royal, but greener and gloomier than ours, surrounded by cloistered walls painted in fresco.

In that great, dismal palace, that exhibition of curiosities, all carefully labelled, did indeed form a museum, a melancholy assemblage of things come from far-away lands, and snatched from the sphere in which they belonged. And old Sieboldt himself seemed to form part of the collection. I went to see him every day, and together we passed long hours turning over the leaves of those Japanese manuscripts ornamented with plates, those scientific and historic works, the former so immense that it was necessary to spread them out upon the floor in order to open them, the others about as long as a finger-nail, legible only with the aid of a magnifying-glass, gilded, exquisitely done, and very valuable. Herr von Sieboldt aroused my admiration with his Japanese encyclopædia in eighty-two volumes, and even translated for me an ode of *Hiak-nin*, a marvellous work, published under the supervision of the Emperors of Japan, and containing the biographies, portraits, and lyric fragments of one hundred of the most famous poets of the Empire. Then we arranged his collection of armor, golden helmets with huge chin-pieces, cuirasses, coats of mail, great two-handed swords, which suggested the days of Knight-templars, and with which a body could be ripped open so easily.

He explained, too, the amorous devices painted upon gilded shells, introduced me to Japanese interiors, showing me the model of his house at Yedo, a lacquered miniature where everything

was represented, from the silken window-shades to the rock-work of the garden, a Lilliputian garden, decorated with tiny plants and indigenous flora. But more than anything else I was interested in those objects of Japanese worship, those tiny, painted, wooden gods, chasubles, consecrated vases, portative chapels, veritable *pupazzi* theatres, which every faithful worshipper has in some corner of his house. Tiny red idols are placed in the rear. A slender knotted cord hangs in front of them. Before commencing his prayer, the son of Japan bows, and by means of this cord strikes a bell which shines at the foot of the altar. It is thus he attracts the attention of his gods. I took a childish pleasure in ringing these magic bells, and allowing my fancy to wander, carried onward by that wave of sound, even to the heart of those Oriental Asias where the rising sun seems to have gilded all things, from the blades of great swords to the edges of tiny books.

When I left the museum my eyes were still sated with all those reflections of lacquer and jade, and the brilliant coloring of geographical charts, especially on the days when the colonel had read to me one of those Japanese odes, of a poetic form both chaste and distinguished, original and profound, the streets of Munich produced a singular effect upon me. Japan and Bavaria were countries entirely new to me, both of which I became acquainted with at the same time, depending on the latter for my knowledge of the former; the two were mingled confused, in my brain, until they

seemed one, an indistinct, shadowy land where everything was tinged with the color blue. That wandering blue line which I had just seen upon Japanese cups, sketched in cloudy outline, I found again traced upon the blue frescos of the walls of Munich; blue soldiers were drilling in the public squares, with Japanese helmets on their heads; the vast tranquil vault overhead was tinged with the blue of the forget-me-not; and it was a coachman in blue livery who had taken me to that hotel, the *Grappe-Bleue!*

V.

A SAIL ACROSS LAKE STARNBERG.

In the blue country also was that shining lake whose sparkling image I still recall. Merely in writing the word "Starnberg" I saw again that great sheet of water close to Munich, its smooth surface reflecting all the sky above; the smoke of a little streamer which sails along its shores lends a certain life and homelike air to the picture. On every side rise the sombre masses formed by the foliage of extensive parks, separated from each other in places by villas, which make white, gleaming gaps here and there. At a still greater elevation, villages with roofs crowded close together, nest-like houses, built upon every acclivity; and looming above these rise the distant Tyrol mountains, the color of the atmosphere in which they

seem to float, and in one corner of this picture a scarcely classic but very charming figure in long gaiters and red, silver-buttoned waistcoat, — the old, old ferryman who cruised about with me one whole Sunday, and seemed so proud to have a Frenchman in his boat.

It was not the first time he had had this honor. He remembered very well that in his youth he had once ferried an officer across the lake. That was sixty years ago, and from the respectful fashion in which the worthy fellow spoke to me, I could judge what impression had been made upon him by that Frenchman of 1806, some gallant Oswald of the First Empire, in tights and hunting-boots, wearing a gigantic *schapska*, and all the insolence of a conqueror! If the ferryman of Starnberg is alive today, I doubt whether he has so much admiration for Frenchmen.

Upon that beautiful lake and in the open parks surrounding the residential part of the city, the citizens of Munich disported themselves of a Sabbath, on pleasure bent. The war had not caused the slightest departure from this custom. On the shore of the lake, I saw in passing that the inns were full of people. Corpulent dames were seated in a circle, their skirts appearing upon the lawn like balloons. Between the branches, which almost touched each other above the blue sheet of water, groups of Gretchens and students passed by, wreathed in a nimbus of smoke from their pipes. A little farther on, in a glade of Maximilian Park, a bridal party of gaudily dressed, boisterous peas-

ants were drinking before long, trestle-like tables, while a green-coated game-keeper, standing with his gun in his hand, in the attitude of one about to fire, was demonstrating the power of that marvellous needle-gun of which the Prussians had made use so successfully. But for that sight, I would scarcely have remembered that fighting was in progress but a few leagues from us. Yet so it was, and the fact was perfectly credible; for that very evening on my return to Munich, I saw upon a little place, as sheltered and isolated as some church-nook, candles burning around the *Marien-Saule*, and women were kneeling before it, their prayers shaken by prolonged sobs.

VI.

BAVARIA.

In spite of all that has been written for some years past upon French chauvinism and our patriotic follies, vanities, and fanfaronades, I do not believe that there is in all Europe a more boastful, vainglorious people, or one more infatuated with themselves, than the people of Bavaria. All its small history, ten detached pages of the history of Germany, is inscribed upon the streets of Munich in gigantic, disproportionate features, in paintings and monuments, like one of those toy Christmas-books meant merely for children, with scarcely anything by way of text, but full of pictures. In

Paris we have only one Arc de Triomphe, — there they have ten triumphal arches, a Gate of Victory, a Marshals' Porch, and I dare not say how many obelisks stand there, erected in commemoration of *the bravery of Bavarian warriors.*

It is something to be a great man in that country. One is sure of having his name engraved everywhere in stone and bronze; at least one statue of him will stand in some public place, or surmounting some frieze, amid white marble figures of victory. This insane fondness for statues, apotheoses, and commemorative monuments is carried to such an extent that at every street-corner there are empty pedestals, erected in readiness for the unknown celebrities whom to-morrow may bring forth. By this time every place must be occupied, — the war of 1870 furnished them with so many heroes, so many glorious episodes.

For instance, it pleases me to fancy that I see the illustrious General von der Than, clad in antique undress, standing in the midst of a verdant square, upon a beautiful pedestal, ornamented with bas-reliefs representing on one side *Bavarian Warriors setting fire to the town of Bazeilles*, on the other, *Bavarian Warriors assassinating wounded French soldiers at the field-hospital of Woerth.* What a splendid monument that would make!

Not content with having their great men scattered in this fashion over the entire city, the Bavarians have reunited them all in a Temple situated at the city gates, and named the *Ruhmeshalle* (Hall of Fame). Beneath a vast portico

of marble columns whose projecting angles form three sides of a square, arranged upon consoles, are the busts of electors, kings, generals, jurisconsults, etc. A catalogue may be obtained in the custodian's room.

Slightly in front rises a colossal statue, Bavaria herself, ninety feet high, standing at the summit of one of those great gloomy staircases which are open to the air on all sides, and rise in the midst of verdurous public gardens. With a lion-skin upon her shoulders, her sword clenched in one hand, in the other the crown of Fame (*Fame* always!) this immense bronze figure, at the hour when I saw it, towards the close of one of those August days when the shadows lengthen enormously, filled the silent plain with its emphatic gesture. All around, a stretch of columns, and profiles of celebrated men grimacing in the setting sun. The scene was so deserted, so dismal! And as I heard the sound of my own footsteps echoing upon the flaggings, there returned to me again that impression of emptiness and grandeur combined which had pursued me since the moment of my arrival in Munich.

Through the interior of Bavaria runs a little winding, cast-iron staircase. The whim seized me, and I climbed to the very top and seated myself for a moment in the head of the colossus, a tiny rotunda-like room, lighted by two windows which formed the eyes of Bavaria. In spite of those open eyes facing the blue horizon of the Alps, it was very hot in that little room. The bronze,

warmed by the sun, enveloped me in an oppressive heat, and I was obliged to descend again very quickly. Nevertheless, I was there long enough to know thee, O mighty Bavaria! big-voiced and grandiloquent. I have seen thy chest without a heart, thy huge arms, like those of some singer, puffy and without muscles, thy sword of wrought metal, and I have discovered in thy hollow head the dull drunkenness and torpor of the beer-drinker's brain. And to think that, in embarking upon that mad war of 1870, our diplomats counted upon thee! Ah! if they too had only taken the trouble to ascend Bavaria.

VII.

THE BLIND EMPEROR.

I HAD been ten days in Munich without receiving the slightest news of my tragedy. I had begun to despair, when one evening in the little beer-garden where we were taking our meals, I saw my colonel appear with a radiant countenance. "I have it," he said; "come to-morrow morning to the museum. We will read it together; you shall see for yourself how fine it is." He was very animated that evening. His eyes sparkled as he spoke. He declaimed quite loudly whole passages of the tragedy, trying to sing the choruses. Two or three times his niece was obliged to make some

attempt at restraining him, with her "*Ounclé, ounclé!*" I attributed this fever and exaltation to genuine lyric enthusiasm. And indeed the fragments that he recited to me seemed very beautiful, and I was in haste to obtain possession of my masterpiece.

The following day, when I arrived in the court-garden I was much surprised to find the collection hall closed. For the colonel to be absent from his museum was so extraordinary an event that as I hastened to his quarters a vague fear took possession of me. The street where he dwelt was a little out of the city, a short, quiet street, with gardens and low houses; it was less quiet than usual; groups of people were talking in the doorways. The door of the Sieboldt house was closed, the shutters open. People were entering it, leaving it, with sorrow in their mien. One could feel that this was one of those catastrophes too large for a single home to hold it, and that it had overleaped its confines and invaded the street as well. As I entered I heard sobs. They came from the rear of a little passage, where was a large room as well-lighted and crowded with objects as a school-room. In it was a long, white, wooden table, books, manuscripts, glass cases for collections, albums covered with embroidered silk, and upon the wall, Japanese armor, engravings, big geographical charts, and amid all this disorder of study and travel the colonel lay stretched upon his bed, his long, straight beard resting upon his chest, while weeping, at one side, knelt the poor

little "*ouncle*." Colonel Sieboldt had died suddenly in the night.

I left Munich the same evening, not having the heart to disturb so much sorrow merely for the sake of a literary fantasy, and so it was that I never knew more of that marvellous Japanese tragedy than the mere title: *The Blind Emperor!* Since that day we have seen another tragedy enacted for which that title imported from Germany would have been most appropriate; sinister indeed it was, but not Japanese, that tragedy full of blood and tears.

LETTERS FROM MY MILL

LETTERS TO AN ABSENT ONE

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PREAMBLE.

BEFORE Maître Honorat Grapazi, notary of the district of Pampérigouste

Appeared:

The Sieur Gaspard Mitifio, husband of Vivette Cornille, owner of the property called "Les Cigalières" and there residing:

The same by these presents has sold and conveyed under warranty of right and possession, free of all debt, claims and mortgages,

To the Sieur Alphonse Daudet, poet, residing in Paris, here present and accepting,

A windmill for flour, situated in the valley of the Rhone, and in the heart of Provence, on a hillside, wooded with pine and live-oak; the said mill being abandoned for twenty years or more, and therefore unfit for grinding, as appears from the wild vines, mosses, rosemarys, and other parasitical growths which have climbed its sails;

Notwithstanding which, such as it is and appears with its great wheel broken and its platform where the grass is growing between the bricks, the Sieur Daudet declares that finding the said mill to his liking and serviceable to his works of poesy, he

accepts the same at his risks and perils, and without any claim whatsoever against the vendor for repairs which may have to be made.

This sale is concluded in the lump for the sum agreed upon, which the Sieur Daudet placed and deposited on the desk in current coin, the which sum was immediately touched and withdrawn by the Sieur Mitifio, within sight of the undersigned notary and witnesses, for which receipt is given.

Deed done at Pampérigouste in the office of Honorat Grapazi, in presence of Francet Mamaï, fife-player, and Louiset, called le Quique, cross-bearer of the White Penitents;

Who have signed with the parties and the notary after reading of the deed.

LETTERS FROM MY MILL.

I.

TAKING POSSESSION.

'T WAS the rabbits who were astonished! So long had they seen the mill-door closed, the walls and the platform invaded by verdure, that they had come to think the race of millers was extinct; and finding the place convenient, they made it, as it were, a sort of headquarters, a centre of strategical operations, — the Jemmapes mill of rabbits. The night of my arrival, there were fully, without exaggeration, a score sitting in a circle on the platform, warming their paws in the moonshine. One second to open a window, and, scat! away went the bivouac, routed; all the little white behinds scurrying away, tails up, into the thicket. I hope they will come back again.

Another much astonished individual was the tenant of the first floor, a solemn old owl with the head of a thinker, who has lived in the mill for over twenty years. I found him in the upper chamber, motionless and erect on the horizontal shaft, in the midst of the plaster rubbish and fallen roof-tiles. He looked at me for a moment with his

round eye; then, alarmed at not knowing me, he began to say, "Hoo! hoo!" and to shake his wings heavily, gray with dust — those devilish thinkers! they never brush themselves. . . Well! never mind, whatever he is, with his blinking eyes and his scowling look, this silent tenant pleased me, and I hastened to beg him to renew his lease. He now occupies, as before, the whole upper part of the mill with an entrance from the roof; I reserve to myself the lower room, a small white-washed room, low and vaulted like a convent refectory.

It is from there that I write to you, with the door wide open to the good sun.

A pretty pine wood, sparkling with light, runs down before me to the foot of the slope. On the horizon, the Alpilles outline their delicate crests. No noise. Faintly, afar, the sound of a fife, a curlew amid the lavender, the mule-bells on the highway. . . All this beautiful Provençal landscape lives by light.

And now, think you I could regret your noisy, darksome Paris? I am so well-off in my mill! It is so exactly the spot I was looking for, a warm little fragrant corner, far from newspapers, cabs, and fog! . . And what pretty things about me! It is scarcely a week since I came, and yet my head is already stuffed full of impressions and memories. *Tenez!* no later than last evening I watched the return of the flocks to the *mas* (farm) which stands at the foot of the slope; and I de-

clare to you I would not give that sight for all the "first nights" that you have had in Paris this week. You shall judge.

I must tell you that in Provence it is the custom, as it is in Switzerland, to send the flocks to the mountains on the coming of hot weather. Animals and men spend five or six months up there under the stars, in grass to their bellies; then, at the first chill of autumn, down they come to the *mas* and feed after that on the little gray foot-hills that are fragrant with rosemary. So last night they came. The gates awaited them, wide open; the folds were filled with fresh straw. From hour to hour the people said: "Now they are at Eyguières — now at the Paradou." Then, all of a sudden, towards evening, a great shout: "Here they come!" and away off in the distance I could see the flocks advancing in a halo of dust. The whole road seemed to be marching with them. The old rams came first, horns in front with a savage air; after them the ruck of the sheep, the mothers rather weary, their nurslings beside them; the mules, with red pompons, carrying in baskets the day-old lambkins, which they rocked as they walked; then came the dogs, their tongues to earth, perspiring, and two tall shepherd rascals swathed in red serge mantles which fell to their heels like copes.

All this defiles before me joyously with a pattering sound like rain, and is swallowed through the gateway. You should see what excitement in the farm! From their high perches the green

and gold peacocks with their tulle crests, have recognized the new-comers and hail them with a formidable trumpet-blast. The poultry yard, which was going to sleep, wakes up with a start. All are afoot, pigeons, ducks, turkeys, guinea-fowl. They all seem crazy; even the hens talk of sitting up all night! One would really think that each sheep had brought back in its wool with the fragrance of the wild Alp a little of that keen mountain air which intoxicates and sets one dancing.

In the midst of all this racket, the flocks regain their abode. Nothing can be more charming than this re-entrance. The old rams are tenderly moved at seeing their old cribs; the lambs, even the little ones born on the journey who had never seen the farm, look about them in amazement.

But most touching of all are the dogs, those brave shepherd dogs, full of business about their flocks and seeing nought else in the *mas*. In vain does the watch-dog call to them from his kennel; the well-bucket full of fresh water entices them in vain; they see nothing, hear nothing till the flocks are housed, the big bolt run on the wicket gate, and the shepherds at table in the lower room. Then and not till then, they consent to go to kennel, and there, while lapping their porringers of soup, they tell their farm comrades what things they have done up there on the mountains, a gloomy place, where there are wolves, and great crimson foxgloves full of dew to the brim.

II.

THE BEAUCAIRE DILIGENCE.

It was the day of my arrival at this place. I had taken the diligence of Beaucaire, a worthy old vehicle that has no great distance to go before she gets home, but which loiters, nevertheless, by the way, to have an air, in the evening, of coming from afar. We were five on the imperial, not counting the conductor.

First, a keeper of the Camargue, a small, stocky, hairy man, smelling of his wild life, with big, bloodshot eyes and silver ear-rings. Then two Beaucairese, a baker and his journeyman, both very red, very short-winded, but splendid in profile, two Roman coins bearing the effigy of Vitellius. Lastly, on the front seat, beside the conductor, a man — no, a cap, an enormous squirrel-skin cap, who said little or nothing and gazed at the road with a melancholy air.

All these persons knew each other, and talked aloud of their affairs very freely. The man of the Camargue told that he was coming from Nîmes, where he had been summoned before an examining-judge to answer for a blow with a scythe given to a shepherd. They have such hot blood in Camargue! — and in Beaucaire too! Did not these very two Beaucairese try to cut each other's

throats apropos of the Blessed Virgin? It seemed that the baker belonged to a parish church that was vowed to the Madonna, the one whom the Provençals call "the good mother" and who carries the little Jesus in her arms. The journeyman, on the contrary, sang in the choir of a new church dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, that beautiful smiling image represented with pendent arms and her hands full of sun-rays. Hence the quarrel. You ought to have seen how those two good Catholics treated each other, they and their madonnas: —

"She is a pretty one, your immaculate!"

"Get away with your good mother!"

"She saw queer things, that one of yours, in Palestine!"

"And yours, hoo! the fright! Who knows what she did n't do? Ask Saint Joseph."

As if to remind me of the harbour of Naples, knives were on the point of glittering, and, upon my word, I believe the theological battle would have ended that way if the conductor had not come to the rescue.

"Let us alone with your madonnas," he said, laughing, to the two Beaucairese; "all that is women's talk, men should n't meddle in such things."

Thereupon he cracked his whip with a sceptical little air which brought every one round to his opinion.

The discussion ended; but the baker, set a-going, felt the need of letting out the remains of

his ardour; so, turning to the unfortunate cap, sad and silent in his corner, he said with a jeering air:

"And your wife, knife-grinder, what parish does she belong to now?"

It is to be supposed that some very comical meaning was in those words, for the whole imperial went off into roars of laughter. The knife-grinder alone did not laugh. He seemed not to hear. Observing that, the baker turned to me.

"You don't know about his wife, monsieur; a queer one, I can tell you. There are not two like her in all Beaucaire."

The laughs redoubled. The knife-grinder did not stir; he contented himself by saying in a low voice: —

"Hold your tongue, baker."

But that devil of a baker had no idea of holding his tongue, and he began again, more jeering than ever: —

"*Viédase!* The comrade is not to be pitied for having a wife like that. Can't be bored one minute with *her*. Just think! a beauty who gets some one to elope with her every six months has plenty to tell you when she comes back. But for all that, it is a queer little household. Just imagine, monsieur, they had n't been married a year when, paf! away went the wife to Spain with a chocolate-maker. The husband, he stayed at home, weeping and drinking. He was almost crazy. By and by the wife came home, dressed as a Spanish girl and carrying a tambourine. We all said to her: 'Hide, hide, he 'll kill you!' Kill her, indeed! not

he! They lived together as tranquil as ever, and she taught him to play the tambourine."

Here a fresh explosion of laughter. In his corner, without raising his head, the knife-grinder murmured again: —

"Hold your tongue, baker."

The baker paid no attention, but continued: —

"You may perhaps think, monsieur, that after her return from Spain the beauty would have kept quiet. Not she! The husband had taken the thing so well, she thought she would try again. After the Spaniard came an officer, then a Rhone boatman, then a musician, then a — I don't know who. The funny thing is that each time it is the same comedy. The wife elopes, the husband weeps; she returns and he's consoled. And still she is carried off, and still he takes her back. Don't you think he has patience, that husband? It must be said that she is mighty pretty, that little woman, a cardinal's dainty bit, lively, dimpled, plump, with a white skin and a pair of nut-brown eyes that look at the men with a laugh. I' faith, Parisian, if you ever come back through Beaucaire — "

"Oh! hold your tongue, baker, I beg of you," said the unfortunate man again, in a heart-rending tone of voice.

At this moment the diligence stopped. We had reached the *mas des Angloires*. The two bakers got out, and I assure you I did not regret them. Sorry jester! We could hear him still laughing in the farm-yard.

The bakers having departed and the Camargue

man being left at Arles, the imperial seemed empty. The conductor got down and walked beside his horses. We were alone in our corners, the knife-grinder and I, without speaking. It was hot; the leather hood of the vehicle seemed burning. At times I felt my eyes closing and my head getting heavy, but I could not sleep. Always in my ears I heard that "Hold your tongue, I beg of you," so gentle yet so agonizing. Neither could he, the poor soul, sleep. From behind I saw his big shoulders shudder and his hand — a long, pallid, stupid hand — trembling on the back of the seat, like the hand of an aged man. He wept.

"Here you are, at your place, Parisian," cried the conductor, suddenly, pointing with the end of his whip to my green hill with the windmill pinned upon it like a big butterfly.

I hastened to get out. Passing the knife-grinder I tried to look at him beneath his cap; I wanted to see him before I left. As if he had fathomed my thought, the unhappy man raised his head abruptly and planting his eyes in mine he said in a hollow voice: —

"Look at me well, friend; and if, one of these days, you hear there has been trouble in Beaucaire you can say that you know the man who struck the blow."

The face was dull and sad, with small and faded eyes. There were tears in those eyes; but in the voice there was hatred. Hatred is the anger of the weak! If I were that wife, I should beware of it.

III.

THE SECRET OF MAÎTRE CORNILLE.

FRANCET MAMAÏ, an old fife-player, who comes from time to time to make a night of it with me, drinking boiled wine, related the other evening a little village drama of which my mill was the witness some twenty years ago. The old man's story touched me, and I shall try to tell it to you just as I heard it.

Imagine, for the moment, my dear readers, that you are sitting before a pot of fragrant wine and that an old Provençal fife-player is speaking to you.

Our countryside, my good monsieur, was not always such a dead region and without renown as it is to-day. There was a time when the millers did a great trade, and from ten leagues round the farmers brought us their wheat to grind. The hills all about the village were covered with windmills. To right and left one saw nothing but sails twirling to the mistral above the pines, strings of little donkeys laden with sacks going up and down the roads; and all the week it was a pleasure to hear on the heights the crack of the whips, the rattle of the sails and the *Dia hue !* of the millers'

men. On Sundays we went to the mills in parties. The millers, they paid for the muscat. The wives were as fine as queens, with their lace kerchiefs and their gold crosses. I took my fife and till it was pitch-dark night they danced the farandole. Those mills, you see, they made the joy and the wealth of our parts.

Unluckily the Paris Frenchmen took an idea to establish a steam flour-mill on the road to Tarascon. Fine thing, great novelty! People took a habit of sending their wheat to the flour-dealers, and the poor windmills were left without work. For some time they tried to struggle, but steam was the stronger, and, one after the other, *pécaïre!* they were forced to shut up. No more files of little donkeys. The handsome wives had to sell their gold crosses. No more muscat! no more farandole! The mistral might blow, but the sails stood still. And then, one fine day, the village rulers ordered all those mills pulled down and their place to be sown with vines and olives.

But in the midst of this general downfall one mill held good and continued to turn courageously on its knoll before the very nose of the steam-millers. That was Maître Cornille's mill, the very one where we are at this moment.

Maître Cornille was an old miller, living for sixty years in flour and mad for his business. The coming of the steam-millers had really made him half crazy. For a week he ran about the village inciting the people and shouting with all

his might that they wanted to poison Provence with steam flour. "Don't go there," he cried; "those brigands in making bread use steam, an invention of the devil, whereas I work by the mistral and the tramontana, which are the breath of the good God." And he spoke out a lot of fine sayings like that in praise of the windmills, but nobody listened to them.

Then, in a fury, the old fellow shut himself up in his mill and lived alone, like a savage beast. He would not even keep his little granddaughter, Vivette, with him, a child of fifteen, who, since the death of her parents, had no one but her *grand* in the world. The poor little thing was now obliged to earn her living, and to hire herself out in the farms wherever she could, for the harvest, the silk-worm times, and the olive-picking. And yet her grandfather seemed to love her, that child. He would often go his four leagues afoot, in the hot sun to see her at the farm where she worked; and when he was near her he would spend whole hours gazing at her and weeping.

In the neighbourhood, people thought that the old miller was niggardly in sending Vivette away, and they said that it did not do him credit to let his granddaughter roam from one farmhouse to another, exposed to the brutality of the bailiffs and to all the miseries of young girls in her condition. And they also thought it very wrong of Maître Cornille, who up to this time had respected himself, to go about the streets like a regular gypsy, barefooted, cap in holes, and trousers

ragged. In fact, on Sundays, when we saw him come in to mass, we were ashamed of him, we old fellows; and Cornille felt it so much that he dared not come and sit upon the workmen's bench. He always stayed at the end of the church, close to the holy-water basin, among the paupers.

In Maître Cornille's life there was something we could not make out. For a long time past no one in the village had taken him wheat, yet the sails of his mill were always turning, as before. At night the old miller was met upon the roads, driving before him his donkey laden with stout sacks of flour.

"Good vespers, Maître Cornille!" the peasants would call to him. "So the mill is going still?"

"Going still, my sons," the old fellow answered with a lively air. "Thank God, it is not work that we lack."

Then, if any one asked him where the devil he found all that work, he would lay a finger on his lips and answer, gravely: "Mum's the word! I am working for exportation." And never could anything further be got out of him.

As for putting your nose in his mill, that was not to be thought of. Little Vivette herself was not allowed to enter.

If we passed in front of it, the door was always seen to be closed, the heavy sails were in motion, the old donkey was browsing on the turf of the platform, and a tall, thin cat, taking the sun on the sill of the window, looked at us malignantly.

All this had the scent of some mystery about it,

and made people gossip. Every one explained in his own way the secret of Maître Cornille, but the general rumour was that there were even more sacks of silver crowns in the mill than sacks of flour.

In the end, however, all was found out; and this was how: —

I discovered, one fine day, while making the young people dance with my fife, that the eldest of my sons and little Vivette were in love with each other. In my heart I was n't sorry, because, after all, the name of Cornille was held in honour among us, and, besides, I knew it would give me pleasure to see that pretty little sparrow of a Vivette hopping about my house. Only, as the lovers had many occasions to be together, I wished, for fear of accidents, to settle the thing at once. So up I went to the mill to say a word or two to the grandfather. Ah! the old wizard! you should just have seen the way he received me! Impossible to make him open the door. I explained the matter as well as I could through the keyhole; and all the while that I was speaking, that rascally lean cat was puffing like a devil above my head.

The old man did n't give me time to finish, but shouted to me, most uncivilly, to get back to my fife, and that if I was in such a hurry to marry my son, I could go and get a girl at the steam-mill. You can think if my blood did n't rise to hear such words; but, all the same, I had wisdom enough to control myself, and, leaving the old madman in his

mill, I returned to tell the children of my failure. Poor lambs! they could not believe it; they begged me, as a favour, to let them go to the mill themselves and speak to grandpapa. I had n't the courage to refuse, and prrrt! off went my lovers.

When they got to the mill, Maître Cornille had just gone out. The door was locked and double-locked, but the old man had left his ladder outside, and immediately the idea came to the children to get in through the window and see what was really going on inside of the famous mill.

Singular thing! the room of the millstone was empty. Not a sack, not a grain of wheat, not the slightest sign of flour on the walls or the spiders' webs! There was not even that good warm smell of crushed wheat that scents a mill so pleasantly. The horizontal bar was covered with dust, and the great lean cat was sleeping on it.

The lower room had the same air of utter poverty and abandonment, — a wretched bed, a few rags, a morsel of bread on a step of the stairway, and, in a corner, three or four worn-out sacks, from which oozed plaster rubbish and chalky earth.

There was the secret of Maître Cornille! It was plaster rubbish that he carried in the evening along the roads to save the honour of the mill and to make believe it was grinding flour! Poor mill! Poor Cornille! For many a long day the steam-mill had robbed them of their last customer. The sails still turned, but the millstone revolved in a void.

The children returned in tears, and told me what they had seen. My heart almost burst as I listened. Not losing a minute, I ran to the neighbours; I told them the thing in a word, and we all agreed that we must at once carry what wheat there was in the village to Cornille's mill. No sooner said than done. The whole village started, and we arrived at the top with a procession of donkeys laden with wheat, — real wheat, that was!

The mill was wide open. Before the door Maître Cornille, seated on a sack of plaster, was weeping, his head in his hands. He had just discovered, on returning, that during his absence some one had entered the mill and surprised his sad secret.

"Poor mè!" he was saying. "There 's nothing for me to do now but to die. The mill is dishonoured."

And he sobbed to break one's heart, calling his mill all sorts of names, and talking to it as if to a real person.

At this moment the donkeys appeared on the terrace, and we all began to shout very loud, as in the good old days of the millers: —

"Ohè! the mill! Ohè! Maître Cornille!"

And there were the sacks piled up before the door, and the fine ruddy grain spilling over to the ground on all sides.

Maître Cornille opened his eyes very wide. In the hollow of his old hand he scooped up some of the wheat and said, laughing and weeping together: —

"It is wheat! . . Lord God! . . Good wheat! Let me alone, let me look at it."

Then, turning towards us, he added: —

"Ah! I knew you would all come back to me. Those steam-mill fellows are thieves."

We wanted to carry him off in triumph to the village.

"No, no, children," he said. "I must first feed my mill. Just think how long it is since she had a morsel between her teeth!"

And we all had tears in our eyes to see the poor old fellow wandering right and left, opening the sacks, watching the millstone, while the wheat was being crushed and the fine powdery flour flew up to the ceiling.

To do ourselves justice, I must tell you that from that day we never let the old miller lack for work. Then, one morning, Maître Cornille died, and the sails of our last mill ceased to turn — forever, this time. Cornille dead, no one took his place. But what of that, monsieur? All things come to an end in this world, and we must believe that the days of windmills are over, like those of the barges on the Rhone, the parliaments, and the grand flowered jackets.

IV.

M. SEGUIN'S GOAT.

TO M. PIERRE GRINGOIRE, LYRIC POET IN PARIS.

YOU will always be the same, my poor Gringoire!

What! a place is offered to you as reporter on one of the best Parisian newspapers, and you have the coolness to refuse it? Look at yourself, you luckless fellow! look at your shabby jacket, those dilapidated breeches, and that thin face that cries out hunger. It is to this that your passion for noble verse has brought you! This is what your loyal ten years' service as page to Sire Apollo has won! On the whole, are you not ashamed of it?

Come, make yourself a reporter, imbecile; make yourself a reporter. You will earn good crown-pieces, and have your knife and fork at Brébant's, and you can exhibit yourself on all first nights with a new feather in your cap.

No? What, you won't? You insist on living free and as you please to the end of the chapter? Well, then! listen to the history of M. Seguin's goat. You will see what is gained by wishing to live at liberty.

M. Seguin never had luck with his goats. He lost them in all kinds of ways. One fine morning

they broke their tether and wandered away to the mountain, where a wolf ate them. Neither the caresses of their master nor fear of the wolf, nothing could restrain them. They were, it appeared, independent goats, wanting at any cost free air and liberty.

The worthy M. Seguin, who did not understand the nature of his animals, was shocked. He said:

"That's enough; goats are bored by living with me; I won't keep another."

However, after losing six in that way, he was not discouraged, and he bought a seventh; but this time he was careful to get her quite young, so young that she might the better get accustomed to live with him.

Ah! Gringoire, she was pretty, that little goat of M. Seguin's, so pretty with her soft eyes, her little tuft of beard like a sub-officer, her black and shiny hoofs, her ribbed horns, and her long, white hair which wrapped her like a mantle! She was almost as charming as that kid of Esmeralda's — you remember, Gringoire? — and then, so docile, so coaxing, letting herself be milked without budging, and never putting her foot in the bowl! A love of a little goat!

Behind M. Seguin's house was a field hedged round with hawthorn. It was there that he put his new boarder. He fastened her to a stake, at the very best part of the meadow, taking care to give her plenty of rope; and from time to time he went to see if she was satisfied. The goat seemed

very happy, and cropped the grass with such heartiness that M. Seguin was delighted.

"At last," thought the poor man, "here's one at least that is n't bored by living with me!"

M. Seguin deceived himself; the goat was bored.

One day she said to herself, looking at the mountain: —

"How nice it must be up there! What a pleasure to skip in the heather, without this cursed rope, which rubs my neck! It is all very well for asses and cattle to browse in a field, but goats! why, *they* want the open."

From that moment the grass of the meadow seemed to her insipid. Ennui seized her. She grew thin, her milk was scanty. It was really piteous to see her, straining at the tether all day, her head turned to the mountain, her nostril flaming, and she saying "Ma-ë" so sadly.

M. Seguin saw that something was the matter with his goat, but he did not know what. One morning, after he had milked her, the goat turned round and said to him in her patois: —

"Listen, M. Seguin; I am so weary here with you; let me go on the mountain."

"Ah! *mon Dieu!* She, too!" cried poor M. Seguin, stupefied, and he let fall the bowl; then, sitting down on the grass at the side of his goat he said: —

"Oh! Blanchette, would you leave me?"

And Blanchette answered: —

"Yes, M. Seguin."

"Is n't there grass enough here to please you?"

"Oh! plenty, M. Seguin."

"Do I tie you too short? shall I lengthen the rope?"

"It is n't worth while, M. Seguin."

"Then what is the matter? what do you want?"

"I want to go on the mountain, M. Seguin."

"But, you unhappy little thing, don't you know there are wolves on the mountain? What would you do if a wolf attacked you?"

"I 'd butt him with my horns."

"A wolf would n't care for your horns. He has eaten up goats of mine with much bigger horns than yours. Don't you remember that poor old Renaude who was here last year? Strong and spiteful as a ram. She fought all night with the wolf, but, in the morning, the wolf ate her."

"*Pecaïre!*' Poor Renaude! But that does not matter, M. Seguin; let me go to the mountain."

"Merciful powers!" exclaimed M. Seguin, "what *is* the matter with my goats? Another one for the wolf to eat! Well, no, I shall save you in spite of yourself, you slut! and for fear you should break your rope I shall put you in the stable, and there you will stay."

Whereupon M. Seguin led the goat into his brand-new stable, and double-locked the door. Unfortunately, he forgot the window, and hardly had he turned his back before the little one was out and away.

You laugh, Gringoire? *Parbleu!* I suppose

so; you take the side of the goats against that good M. Seguin. We 'll see if you laugh presently.

When the white goat reached the mountain there was general delight. Never had the old fir-trees seen anything so pretty. They received her like a little princess. The chestnut-trees bent to the ground to kiss her with the tips of their branches. The golden gorse opened wide to let her pass, and smelt just as sweet as it could. In fact, the whole mountain welcomed her.

You can imagine, Gringoire, how happy she was! No more rope, no stake, nothing to prevent her from skipping and browsing as she pleased. My dear fellow, the grass was above her horns! and such grass! — luscious, delicate, toothsome, made of all sorts of plants. Quite another thing from that grass in the meadow. And the flowers, oh! Great blue campanulas and crimson foxgloves with their long calyxes, a perfect forest of wild-flowers giving out an intoxicating sweetness.

The white goat, a little tipsy, wallowed in the thick of them with her legs in the air, and rolled down the banks pell-mell with the falling leaves and the chestnuts. Then, suddenly, she sprang to her feet with a bound, and hop! away she went, head foremost, through thicket and bushes, now on a rock, now in a gully, up there, down there, everywhere. You would have said that ten of M. Seguin's goats were on the mountain.

The fact is, Blanchette was afraid of nothing.

She sprang with a bound over torrents that spattered her as she passed with a dust of damp

spray. Then, all dripping, she would stretch herself out on a nice flat rock and dry in the sun. Once, coming to the edge of a slope with a bit of laurel between her teeth, she saw below, far below on the plain, the house of M. Seguin with the meadow behind it; and she laughed till she cried.

"How small it is!" she said; "how could I ever have lived there?"

Poor little thing! being perched so high she fancied she was tall as the world.

Well! it was a good day for M. Seguin's goat. About noon, running from right to left, she fell in with a herd of chamois munching a wild vine with all their teeth. Among them our little white-gowned rover made quite a sensation. They gave her the choicest place at the vine, and all those gentlemen were very gallant. In fact, it appears — but this is between ourselves, Gringoire — that a young chamois with a black coat had the great good fortune to please Blanchette. The pair wandered off in the woods for an hour or so, and if you want to know what they said to each other, go ask those chattering brooks that are running invisible through the mosses.

Suddenly the wind freshened. The mountain grew violet; it was dusk.

"Already!" said the little goat; and she stopped, quite surprised.

Below, the fields were drowned in mist. M. Seguin's meadow disappeared in the fog, and

nothing could be seen of the house but the roof and a trifle of smoke. She heard the little bells of a flock that was on its way home, and her soul grew sad. A falcon, making for his nest, swept her with his wings as he passed. She shuddered. Then came a howl on the mountain:

"Hoo! hoo!"

She thought of the wolf; all day that silly young thing had never once thought of it. At the same moment a horn sounded far, far down the valley. It was that good M. Seguin, making a last effort.

"Hoo! hoo!" howled the wolf.

"Come back! come back!" cried the horn.

Blanchette felt a wish to return, but remembering the stake, the rope, the hedge of the field, she thought that she never could endure that life again and 't was better to remain where she was.

The horn ceased to sound.

The goat heard behind her the rustling of leaves. She turned and saw in the shadow two short ears, erect, and two eyes shining. It was the wolf.

Enormous, motionless, seated on his tail, he was looking at the little white goat and smacking his lips in advance. As he knew very well he should eat her up, the wolf was not in a hurry; but when she turned round and saw him he began to laugh wickedly: "Ha! ha! M. Seguin's little goat!—" and he licked his great red tongue round his wily chops.

Blanchette felt she was lost. For an instant, remembering the story of old Renaude, who had

fought all night only to be eaten in the morning, she said to herself that 'twas better, perhaps, to be eaten at once; but then, thinking otherwise, she put herself on guard, head low, horns forward, like the brave little goat that she was. Not that she had any hope of killing the wolf, — goats can't kill wolves, — but only to see if she, too, could hold out as long as old Renaude.

Then the monster advanced, and the pretty little horns began the dance.

Ah! the brave goatling! with what heart she went at it! More than ten times — I 'm not exaggerating, Gringoire — more than ten times she forced the wolf back to get breath. During each of these momentary truces the dainty little thing nibbled one more blade of her dearly loved grass; then, with her mouth full, she returned to the combat. It lasted all through the night. From time to time M. Seguin's goat looked up at the stars as they danced on the cloudless sky and said to herself: —

"Oh! if I can only hold out till dawn."

One after another, the stars went out. Blanchette redoubled the blows of her horns, and the wolf the snap of his teeth. A pale gleam showed on the horizon. The hoarse crowing of a cock rose from a barnyard.

"At last!" said the poor little goat, who had only awaited the dawn to die; and she stretched herself out on the ground in her pretty white fur all spotted with gore.

Then the wolf fell upon her and ate her up.

Adieu, Gringoire!

The story you have now heard is not a tale of my own invention. If ever you come to Provence, our farmers will often tell you of *la cabro de Moussu Seguin, que se battégue touto la neui emé lou loup, e piei lou matin lou loup la mangé.*

You understand me, Gringoire: "And then, in the morning, the wolf ate her up."

THE STARS.

TALE OF A PROVENÇAL SHEPHERD.

In the days when I kept sheep on the Lubéron, I was often for weeks together without seeing a living soul, alone in the pastures with my dog Labri and the flock. From time to time the hermit of the Mont-de-l'Ure passed that way in search of simples; or occasionally I saw the blackened face of some Piedmontese charcoal-burner; but these were quiet folk, silent by force of solitude, having lost their liking for talk, and knowing nothing of what went on below in the towns and villages. So when I heard, every fortnight, on the road coming up the mountain, the bells of our farm mule bringing me food for the next two weeks, and when I saw, appearing little by little above the slope, the lively head of our *miarro* (farm-boy) or the red coif of old Aunt Norade, I was really very happy. I made them tell me all the news of the world down below, the baptisms, the marriages, etc.; but that which interested me above all was to know what the daughter of my master was about, our Demoiselle Stephanette, the prettiest young lady in all the country round. Without seeming to take great interest, I managed to find out when she went to

fêtes and dances, and whether she had new lovers; and if others asked me what such things mattered to me, a poor shepherd on a mountain, I answered that I was twenty years old, and that Mademoiselle Stephanette was the loveliest thing I had ever seen in my life.

Now one Sunday, when I was expecting my two weeks' provisions, it happened that they did not come until very late. In the morning I said to myself, "'Tis the fault of high mass;" then, about mid-day, there came up a great storm, and I thought that the mule could not start on account of the roads. At last, about three o'clock, when the sky was washed clear and the mountain was shining with sun and water, I heard amid the dripping from the leaves and the gurgle of the overflowing brooks, the tinkle of the mule-bells, as gay and alert as the grand church chimes of an Easter-day. But it was not our little *miarro,* nor old Aunt Norade who was leading him. It was — guess who? Our demoiselle, my children! our demoiselle in person, sitting up straight between the osier baskets, quite rosy with the mountain air and the refreshing coolness of the storm.

The boy was ill; Aunt Norade was off for a holiday with the children. The beautiful Stephanette told me all this as she got off the mule, and also that she came late because she had lost her way; but to see her dressed in her Sunday best, with her flowered ribbon, her brilliant petticoat, and her laces, I must say she had more the look of having lingered at some dance than of search-

ing for a path among the bushes. Oh, tne dainty creature! My eyes never wearied of looking at her. It is true that I had never before seen her quite so near. Sometimes, in winter, when the flocks had come down upon the plains and I returned to the farmhouse at night for my supper, she would cross the hall quickly, scarcely speaking to the servants, always gayly dressed and perhaps a little haughty. And now I had her before me, all to myself! Was it not enough to turn my head?

When she had taken the provisions from the basket Stephanette looked about her with curiosity. Lifting her handsome best petticoat slightly, for it might have got injured, she entered the cabin, asked to see where I slept, — in a trough full of straw with a sheepskin over it, — looked at my big cloak hanging to the wall, my crook, and my gun. All of which amused her. "So this is where you live, my poor shepherd?" she said. "How bored you must be all alone. What do you do? What do you think about?" I had a great mind to answer, "Of you, my mistress," and I should n't have lied; but my trouble of mind was so great that I could n't so much as find a word. I think she noticed this and the mischievous creature took pleasure in doubling my embarrassment by her teasing. "And your sweetheart, shepherd; she comes to see you sometimes, does she not? I am sure she must be the golden kid, or that fairy Estrella who flits along the summits of the mountains." And she herself as she spoke to

me had quite the air of the fairy Estrella, with that pretty laugh from her head tossed back, and her haste to be off, which made her visit seem much like a vision. "Adieu, shepherd."

"Your servant, mistress." And away she went, with the empty baskets.

When she passed out of sight down the sloping path it seemed to me that the stones rolled away by the hoofs of the mule were falling, one by one, on my heart. I heard them a long, long time; and till late in the day I sat as if dozing, not daring to stir for fear lest my vision should leave me.

Towards evening, as the depths of the valleys were beginning to grow blue, and the creatures were pressing together and bleating to enter the fold, I heard myself called from below, and I saw our young lady, no longer laughing as before, but trembling with fear and cold and dampness. It seems she had found at the base of the slope the river Sorgue so swollen by the storm that, being determined to cross it, she came near getting drowned. The terrible part was that at that hour of the night there was no use attempting to return to the farm, because she never could have found her way by the cross-road all by herself, and, as for me, I could not leave my flock. The idea of passing the night on the mountain worried her greatly, especially on account of her people's anxiety. I soothed her as best I could. "The nights are so short in July, mistress — it is only a moment's trouble." And I lighted a big fire

quickly to dry her little feet and her gown all soaked in the river. After which I brought her some milk and cheese; but the poor little thing thought neither of warmth nor of food; and when I saw the big tears welling up in her eyes I wanted to cry myself.

And now the darkness was really coming. Nothing remained on the crest of the mountain but a dust of the sun, a vapour of light to the westward. I asked our young lady to enter and rest in the cabin; and then, having stretched a fine new sheepskin on a pile of fresh straw, I wished her good-night and went out to sit by myself before the door. God is my witness that, in spite of the fire of love that burned my blood, no evil thought came into my mind, — nothing but a great pride to think that in a corner of my hut, quite close to the flock that eyed her inquisitively, the daughter of my master, a lamb more precious and snow-white than they, was sleeping, intrusted to my care. Never did the heavens seem to me so deep, the stars so bright.

Suddenly the wicket opened and Stephanette appeared. She could not sleep. The creatures had crackled the straw as they moved, or else they were bleating as they dreamed. She preferred to come out to the fire. Seeing this I threw my goatskin round her shoulders and blew up a flame, and there we stayed, sitting side by side, without saying a word. If you have ever passed a night beneath the stars you know that during the hours when people sleep a mysterious

world wakes up in the solitude and silence. The springs sing clearer, the ponds are lighted by little flames. All the spirits of the mountain go and come freely; there 's rustling in the air, imperceptible noises as if we could hear the branches grow and the grass springing. Day is the life of beings, but night is the life of things. If you are not accustomed to it 't is alarming; and so our young lady shuddered and pressed against me at the slightest noise. Once a long, melancholy cry came from the pond that shone below us, rising in undulations. At the same instant a beautiful shooting star glided above our heads in the same direction, as if that plaint which we had just heard had brought light with it.

"What is that?" asked Stephanette in a whisper.

"A soul that enters paradise, my mistress," and I made the sign of the cross. She too crossed herself, and sat for a moment with her head turned upward to the sky, reflecting. Then she said to me: "Is it true, shepherd, that all of you are wizards?"

"Not so, mistress. But here we live closer to the stars, and we know what goes on among them better than the people of the plains."

She still looked upward, resting her head upon her hand, wrapped in the goatskin, like a little celestial shepherd. "How many there are! how beautiful! Never did I see so many. Do you know their names, shepherd?"

"Why, yes, mistress. . . See! just above us, that 's the *Path of Saint James* (the Milky Way).

It goes from France to Spain. 'T was Saint James of Galicia who marked it out to show the way to our brave Charlemagne when he made war upon the Saracens.[1] Farther on, there's the *Chariot of Souls* (Great Bear), with its four resplendent axles. The three stars before it are its *three steeds*, and the little one close to the third is the *charioteer*. Do you see that rain of stars falling over there? Those are the souls that the Good God won't have in heaven. . . Lower down there 's the *Rake* or the *Three Kings* (Orion). That serves us for a clock, us shepherds. Merely by looking at them now I know 't is past midnight. Still lower, over there to the southward, shines *John of Milan*, the torch of the stars (Sirius). Here 's what the shepherds say about that star: It seems that one night *John of Milan* with the *Three Kings* and the *Poucinière* (the Pleiad) were invited to the wedding of a star, a friend of theirs. The *Poucinière*, being in a hurry, started, they say, the first, and took the upper road. Look at her, up there, in the depths of the sky. The *Three Kings* cut across and caught up with her, but that lazy *John of Milan*, who slept too late, stayed quite behind, and being furious, tried to stop them by flinging his stick. That 's why the *Three Kings* are sometimes called the *Stick of John of Milan*. . . But the most beautiful of all the stars, mistress, is ours, the *Shepherd's Star*, which lights us at dawn of day when we lead out the flock, and at night when we

[1] All these details of popular astronomy are translated from the "Provençal Almanach," published at Avignon.

gather it in. We call that star the *Maguelonne*, the beautiful Maguelonne which runs after *Pierre de Provence* (Saturn), and marries him every seven years."

"Why, shepherd! do stars really marry?"

"To be sure they do, mistress."

And as I tried to explain to her what such marriages were I felt something fresh and delicate lie softly on my shoulder. 'T was her head, weighed down by sleep, which rested upon me with a dainty rustle of ribbons and laces and waving hair. She stayed thus, never moving, till the stars in the sky grew pale, dimmed by the rising day. As for me, I looked at her sleeping, a little shaken in the depths of my being, but sacredly protected by that clear night, which has never given me any but noble thoughts. Around us the stars continued their silent way, docile as a flock, and at times I fancied that one of them, the most delicate, the most brilliant, had lost its way and had come down to rest upon my shoulder and sleep.

THE ARLESIAN GIRL.

GOING down from my mill to the village I pass a farmhouse built close to the road at the end of a great courtyard planted with hazel-trees. It is the true home of a Provençal farmer, with its red tiles, its broad brown front and irregular windows, and above, at the peak of the garret, a weather-vane, pulleys to hoist the forage, and a few tufts of hay caught in the transit.

Why did that house so affect me? Why did that closed portal seem to wring my heart? I could not have told why, and yet that home always gave me a chill. There was silence around it. When any one passed, the dogs did not bark, the guinea-fowls fled without screaming. Within, not a voice! Nothing, not so much as a mule-bell. If it were not for the white curtains at the windows and the smoke that rose from the roof, the place might have seemed uninhabited.

Yesterday, on the stroke of midday, I was returning from the village and, to escape the sun, I was hugging the walls of the farm in the shade of the hazel-trees. On the road, directly in front of the courtyard, silent serving-men were loading a waggon with hay. The gates were open. I cast

in a look as I passed, and I saw, at the farther end of the courtyard, his head in his hands and his elbows on a large stone table, a tall old man, white-headed, in a jacket too short for him, and ragged breeches. I stopped. One of the men said to me in a low voice: —

"Hush! 't is the master. He is like that since the misfortune of his son."

At this moment a woman and a little boy dressed in black, passed near to us carrying large gilt prayer-books, and entered the farmhouse.

The man added: —

"That 's the mistress and Cadet, returning from mass. They go there every day since the lad killed himself. Ah! monsieur, what desolation! The master still wears the dead boy's clothes; they can't make him quit them. *Dia! hue!* Gee up!"

The waggon started. I, who wanted to know more, asked the driver to let me get up beside him; and it was there, seated on the hay, that I heard this heart-breaking story.

He was called Jan. A fine young peasant, twenty years of age, virtuous as a girl, firm, with a frank face, and very handsome; so the women looked at him; but as for him he had only one woman in his head, — a little Arlesian girl, all velvet and laces, whom he met one day at Arles, on the Lice. At the farmhouse this acquaintance was not viewed, at first, with satisfaction. The girl was thought coquettish, and her parents were not of the neigh

bourhood. But Jan wanted his Arlesian love with all his might. He said: —

"I shall die if they don't give her to me."

They had to come to it. It was settled that the marriage should take place after harvest.

One Sunday evening, in the large courtyard, the family were finishing dinner. It was almost a wedding-feast. The bride was not present, but toasts had been drunk in her honour. Suddenly a man appeared at the gate and asked, in a trembling voice, to speak to Maître Estève in private. Estève rose and went out upon the highway.

"Master," said the man, "you are marrying your son to a slut who has been my mistress for the last two years. What I say I prove; here are letters. Her parents knew all, and promised her to me, but since your son has courted her neither she nor her parents will have me. But I think, after that, she ought not to be the wife of another."

"Very well," said Maître Estève, after he had read the letters. "Come in, and drink a glass of muscat."

The man replied: —

"Thank you! no; I am more sorrowful than thirsty." And he went away.

The father returned, impassible. He resumed his place at the table, and the meal ended gayly.

That evening Maître Estève and his son went to walk in the fields. They were out a long time; when they returned the mother awaited them.

"Wife," said the farmer, leading his son to her, "Kiss him; he is very unhappy."

Jan never spoke again of his Arlesian girl. But he still loved her, and more than ever after she was shown to him in the arms of another. Only, he was too proud to speak of it; and it was that which killed him, poor lad! Sometimes he would spend whole days in a corner without moving. At other times he would dig with fury and do himself, alone, the work of ten labourers. But as soon as evening came he took the road to Arles; walking straight before him till he saw the slender spires of the town rise in the sunset glow. Then he returned. Never did he go any farther.

Seeing him thus, always sad and solitary, the people of the farmhouse knew not what to do. They feared some danger. Once, at table, his mother, looking at him with eyes full of tears, said: —

"Listen, Jan, if you wish for her all the same, we will give her to you."

The father, red with shame, lowered his head.

Jan made sign of refusal and went away.

From that day forth he changed his way of living, affecting to be gay in order to reassure his parents. He was seen once more at balls, in the wine-shops, at the races. At the election in Fonvieille it was he who led the *farandole*.

The father said: "He is cured." The mother still had fears and watched her child more than ever. Jan slept with Cadet close to the silk-worm attic; the poor old woman had her bed made up beside their chamber, — the silk-worms might need her, she said.

And now came the fête of Saint-Éloi, the patron of farmers.

Great joy at the farmhouse. There was châteauneuf for every one, and boiled wine seemed to rain. Then, fire-crackers and fire-barrels, and coloured lanterns in the hazel trees. Vive Saint-Éloi! They farandoled to death. Cadet burned his new blouse. Jan himself seemed happy; he insisted on making his mother dance, and the poor woman wept with joy.

By midnight they all went to bed. They needed sleep. Jan did not sleep, and Cadet said the next day he had sobbed all night. Ah! I tell you he was deeply bitten, that lad.

The next day, at dawn, the mother heard some one cross her room running. She had a presentiment.

"Jan, is that you?"

Jan did not answer; he was already on the stairway.

Quick, quick the mother rose.

"Jan, where are you going?"

He ran to the hayloft; she followed him.

"My son, for God's sake!"

He closed the door and bolted it.

"Jan, my little Jan! answer! What are you doing?"

Her old hands, trembling, felt for the latch. A window opened, the sound of a fall was heard on the stones of the courtyard, and that was all.

He had said to himself, poor lad: "I love her too much — I must go."

Ah! miserable hearts that we have! And yet, it is hard that contempt is unable to kill love.

That morning the people in the village wondered who it was that cried out so terribly down there, toward the Estève farm.

In the courtyard, before the stone table, all covered with dew and blood, the mother, naked, sat lamenting with her dead boy in her arms.

THE POPE'S MULE.

OF all the pretty sayings, proverbs, adages, with which our Provençal peasantry decorate their discourse, I know of none more picturesque, or more peculiar than this: — for fifteen leagues around my mill, when they speak of a spiteful and vindictive man, they say: "That fellow! distrust him! he 's like the Pope's mule who kept her kick for seven years."

I tried for a long time to find out whence that proverb came, what that Pope's mule was, and why she kept her kick for seven years. No one could give me any information on the subject, not even Francet Mamaï, my old fife-player, though he knows his Provençal legends to the tips of his fingers. Francet thought, as I did, that there must be some ancient chronicle of Avignon behind it, but he had never heard of it otherwise than as a proverb.

"You won't find it anywhere except in the Grasshoppers' Library," said the old man, laughing.

The idea struck me as a good one; and as the Grasshoppers' Library is close at my door, I shut myself up there for over a week.

It is a wonderful library, admirably stocked, open to poets night and day, and served by little

librarians with cymbals who make music for you all the time. I spent some delightful days there, and after a week of researches (on my back) I ended by discovering what I wanted, namely: the story of the mule and that famous kick which she kept for seven years. The tale is pretty, though rather naïve, and I shall try to tell it to you just as I read it yesterday in a manuscript coloured by the weather, smelling of good dried lavender and tied with the Virgin's threads — as they call gossamer in these parts.

Whoso did not see Avignon in the days of the Popes has seen nothing. For gayety, life, animation, the excitement of festivals, never was a town like it. From morning till night there was nothing but processions, pilgrimages, streets strewn with flowers, draped with tapestries, cardinals arriving by the Rhone, banners in the breeze, galleys dressed in flags, the Pope's soldiers chanting Latin on the squares, and the tinkling rattle of the begging friars; while from garret to cellar of houses that pressed, humming, round the great papal palace like bees around their hive, came the tick-tack of lace-looms, the to-and-fro of shuttles weaving the gold thread of chasubles, the tap-tap of the goldsmith's chasing-tools tapping on the chalices, the tuning of choir-instruments at the lute-makers, the songs of the spinners at their work; and above all this rose the sound of bells, and always the echo of certain tambourines coming from away down there on the bridge of Avignon.

Because, with us, when the people are happy they must dance — they must dance; and as in those days the streets were too narrow for the *farandole*, fifes and tambourines posted themselves on the bridge of Avignon in the fresh breeze of the Rhone, and day and night folks danced, they danced. Ah! the happy times! the happy town! Halberds that did not wound, prisons where the wine was put to cool; no hunger, no war. That's how the Popes of the Comtat governed their people; and that's why their people so deeply regretted them.

There was one Pope especially, a good old man called Boniface. Ah! that one, many were the tears shed in Avignon when he was dead. He was so amiable, so affable a prince! He laughed so merrily on the back of his mule! And when you passed him, were you only a poor little gatherer of madder-roots, or the grand provost of the town, he gave you his benediction so politely! A real Pope of Yvetot, but a Yvetot of Provence, with something delicate in his laugh, a sprig of sweet marjoram in his cardinal's cap, and never a Jeanneton, — the only Jeanneton he was ever known to have, that good Father, was his vineyard, his own little vineyard which he planted himself, three leagues from Avignon, among the myrtles of Château-Neuf.

Every Sunday, after vespers, the good man paid court to his vineyard; and when he was up there, sitting in the blessed sun, his mule near him, his cardinals stretched out beneath the grapevines,

he would order a flask of the wine of his own growth to be opened,—that beautiful wine, the colour of rubies, which is now called the *Chateau-Neuf des Papes*, and he sipped it with sips, gazing at his vineyard tenderly. Then, the flask empty, the day fading, he rode back joyously to town, the Chapter following; and when he crossed the bridge of Avignon through the tambourines and the *farandoles*, his mule, set going by the music, paced along in a skipping little amble, while he himself beat time to the dance with his cap, which greatly scandalized the cardinals but made the people say: "Ah! the good prince! Ah! the kind Pope!"

What the Pope loved best in the world, next to his vineyard of Château-Neuf, was his mule. The good man doted on that animal. Every evening before he went to bed he went to see if the stable was locked, if nothing was lacking in the manger; and never did he rise from table without seeing with his own eyes the preparation of a great bowl of wine in the French fashion with sugar and spice, which he took to his mule himself, in spite of the remarks of his cardinals. It must be said that the animal was worth the trouble. She was a handsome black mule, with reddish points, sure-footed, hide shining, back broad and full, carrying proudly her thin little head decked out with pompons and ribbons, silver bells and streamers; gentle as an angel withal, innocent eyes, and two long ears, always shaking, which gave her the look of a down-

right good fellow. All Avignon respected her, and when she passed through the streets there were no civilities that the people did not pay her; for every one knew there was no better way to stand well at court, and that the Pope's mule, for all her innocent look, had led more than one man to fortune, — witness Tistet Védène and his amazing adventure.

This Tistet Védène was, in point of fact, an impudent young rogue, whom his father, Guy Védène, the goldsmith, had been forced to turn out of his house, because he would not work and only debauched the apprentices. For six months Tistet dragged his jacket through all the gutters of Avignon, but principally those near the papal palace; for the rascal had a notion in his head about the Pope's mule, and you shall now see what mischief was in it.

One day when his Holiness was riding all alone beneath the ramparts, behold our Tistet approaching him and saying, with his hands clasped in admiration: —

"Ah! *mon Dieu*, Holy Father, what a fine mule you are riding! Just let me look at her. Ah! Pope, what a mule! The Emperor of Germany has n't her equal."

And he stroked her and spoke to her softly as if to a pretty young lady: —

"Come here, my treasure, my jewel, my pearl —"

And the good Pope, quite touched, said to himself: —

"What a nice young fellow; how kind he is to my mule!"

And the next day what do you think happened? Tistet Védène changed his yellow jacket for a handsome lace alb, a purple silk hood, shoes with buckles; and he entered the household of the Pope, where no one had ever yet been admitted but sons of nobles and nephews of cardinals. That's what intriguing means! But Tistet was not satisfied with that.

Once in the Pope's service, the rascal continued the game he had played so successfully. Insolent to every one, he showed attentions and kindness to none but the mule, and he was always to be met with in the courtyards of the palace with a handful of oats, or a bunch of clover, shaking its pink blooms at the window of the Holy Father as if to say: "Hein! who 's that for, hey?" Time and again this happened, so that, at last, the good Pope, who felt himself getting old, left to Tistet the care of looking after the stable and of carrying to the mule his bowl of wine, — which did not cause the cardinals to laugh.

Nor the mule either. For now, at the hour her wine was due she beheld half a dozen little pages of the household slipping hastily into the hay with their hoods and their laces; and then, soon after, a good warm smell of caramel and spices pervaded the stable, and Tistet Védène appeared bearing carefully the bowl of hot wine. Then the poor animal's martyrdom began.

That fragrant wine she loved, which kept her warm and gave her wings, they had the cruelty to bring it into her stall and let her smell of it; then, when her nostrils were full of the perfume, away! and the beautiful rosy liquor went down the throats of those young scamps! And not only did they steal her wine, but they were like devils, those young fellows, after they had drunk it. One pulled her ears, another her tail. Quiquet jumped on her back, Béluguet put his hat on her head, and not one of the rascals ever thought that with one good kick of her hind-legs the worthy animal could send them all to the polar star, and farther still if she chose. But no! you are not the Pope's mule for nothing — that mule of benedictions and plenary indulgences. The lads might do what they liked, she was never angry with them; it was only Tistet Védène whom she hated. He, indeed! when she felt him behind her, her hoofs itched; and reason enough too. That good-for-nothing Tistet played her such villanous tricks. He had such cruel ideas and inventions after drinking.

One day he took it into his head to make her go with him into the belfry, high up, very high up, to the peak of the palace! What I am telling you is no tale; two hundred thousand Provençal men and women saw it. Imagine the terror of that unfortunate mule, when, after turning for an hour, blindly, round a corkscrew staircase and climbing I don't know how many steps, she found herself all of a sudden on a platform blazing with light, while a thousand feet below her she saw a

diminutive Avignon, the booths in the market no bigger than nuts, the Pope's soldiers moving about their barrack like little red ants, and down there, bright as a silver thread, a microscopic little bridge on which they were dancing, dancing. Ah! poor beast! what a panic! At the cry she gave, all the windows of the palace shook.

"What's the matter? what are they doing to my mule?" cried the good Pope, rushing out upon his balcony.

Tistet Védène was already in the courtyard pretending to weep and tear his hair.

"Ah! great Holy Father, what's the matter, indeed! *Mon Dieu!* what will become of us? There's your mule gone up to the belfry."

"All alone?"

"Yes, great Holy Father, all alone. Look up there, high up. Don't you see the tips of her ears pointing out — like two swallows?"

"Mercy!" cried the poor Pope, raising his eyes. "Why, she must have gone mad! She'll kill herself! Come down, come down, you luckless thing!"

Pécaïre! she wanted nothing so much as to come down; but how? which way? The stairs? not to be thought of; they can be mounted, those things; but as for going down! why, they are enough to break one's legs a hundred times. The poor mule was in despair, and while circling round and round the platform with her big eyes full of vertigo, she thought of Tistet Védène.

"Ah! bandit, if I only escape — what a kick to-morrow morning!"

That idea of a kick put some courage into her heart; without it she never could have held good. . . At last, they managed to save her; but 'twas quite a serious affair. They had to get her down with a derrick, ropes, and a sling. You can fancy what humiliation it was for a Pope's mule to see herself suspended at that height, her four hoofs swimming in the void like a cockchafer hanging to a string. And all Avignon looking at her!

The unfortunate beast could not sleep at night. She fancied she was still turning round and round that cursèd platform while the town laughed below, and again she thought of the infamous Tistet and the fine kick of her heels she would let fly at him next day. Ah! friends, what a kick! the dust of it would be seen as far as Pampérigouste.

Now, while this notable reception was being made ready for him in the Pope's stable what do you think Tistet Védène was about? He was descending the Rhone on a papal galley, singing as he went his way to the Court of Naples with a troop of young nobles whom the town of Avignon sent every year to Queen Jeanne to practise diplomacy and fine manners. Tistet Védène was not noble; but the Pope was bent on rewarding him for the care he had given to his mule, and especially for the activity he displayed in saving her from her perilous situation.

The mule was the disappointed party on the morrow!

"Ah! the bandit! he suspected something," she thought, shaking her silver bells. "No matter for

that, scoundrel; you 'll find it when you get back, that kick; I 'll keep it for you!"

And she kept it for him.

After Tistet's departure the Pope's mule returned to her tranquil way of life and her usual proceedings. No more Quiquet, no more Béluguet in the stable. The good old days of the spiced wine came back, and with them good-humour, long siestas, and the little gavotte step as she crossed the bridge of Avignon. Nevertheless, since her adventure a certain coldness was shown to her in the town. Whisperings were heard as she passed, old people shook their heads, children laughed and pointed to the belfry. The good Pope himself no longer had quite the same confidence in his friend, and when he let himself go into a nice little nap on her back of a Sunday, returning from his vineyard, he always had this thought latent in his mind: "What if I should wake up there on the platform!" The mule felt this, and she suffered, but said nothing; only, whenever the name of Tistet Védène was uttered in her hearing, her long ears quivered, and she struck the iron of her shoes hard upon the pavement with a little snort.

Seven years went by. Then, at the end of those seven years, Tistet Védène returned from the Court of Naples. His time was not yet finished over there, but he had heard that the Pope's head mustard-bearer had died suddenly at Avignon, and as the place seemed a good one, he hurried back in haste to solicit it.

When this intriguing Védène entered the pal-

ace the Holy Father did not recognize him, he had grown so tall and so stout. It must also be said that the good Pope himself had grown older, and could not see much without spectacles.

Tistet was not abashed.

"What, great Holy Father! you don't remember me? It is I, Tistet Védène."

"Védène?"

"Why, yes, you know the one that took the wine to your mule."

"Ah! yes, yes, — I remember. A good little fellow, that Tistet Védène! And now, what do you want of me?"

"Oh! very little, great Holy Father. I came to ask — By the bye, have you still got her, that mule of yours? Is she well? Ah! good! I came to ask you for the place of the chief mustard-bearer who lately died."

"Mustard-bearer, you! Why you are too young. How old are you?"

"Twenty-two, illustrious pontiff; just five years older than your mule. Ah! palm of God, what a fine beast she is! If you only knew how I love her, that mule, — how I pined for her in Italy! Won't you let me see her?"

"Yes, my son, you shall see her," said the worthy Pope, quite touched. "And as you love her so much I must have you live near her. Therefore, from this day I attach you to my person as chief mustard-bearer. My cardinals will cry out, but no matter! I'm used to that. Come and see me to-morrow, after vespers, and you

shall receive the insignia of your rank in presence of the whole Chapter, and then I will show you the mule and you shall go to the vineyard with us, hey! hey!"

I need not tell you if Tistet Védène was content when he left the palace, and with what impatience he awaited the ceremony of the morrow. And yet there was one more impatient and more content than he: it was the mule. After Védène's return, until vespers on the following day that terrible animal never ceased to stuff herself with oats, and practise her heels on the wall behind her. She, too, was preparing for the ceremony.

Well, on the morrow, when vespers were said, Tistet Védène made his entry into the papal courtyard. All the grand clergy were there; the cardinals in their red robes, the devil's advocate in black velvet, the convent abbots in their small mitres, the wardens of Saint-Agrico, the violet hoods of the Pope's household, the lower clergy also, the Pope's guard in full uniform, the three penitential brotherhoods, the hermits of Mont-Ventoux, with their sullen faces, and the little clerk who walks behind them with a bell, the flagellating friars naked to the waist, the ruddy sextons in judge's gowns, all, all, down to the givers of holy water, and the man who lights and him who puts out the candles — not one was missing. Ah! 't was a fine ordination! Bells, fire-crackers, sunshine, music, and always those frantic tambourines leading the *farandole* over there, on the bridge.

When Védène appeared in the midst of this

great assembly, his fine bearing and handsome face sent a murmur of admiration through the crowd. He was truly a magnificent Provençal; but of the blond type, with thick hair curling at the tips, and a dainty little beard, that looked like slivers of fine metal fallen from the chisel of his father, the goldsmith. The rumour ran that the fingers of Queen Jeanne had sometimes played in the curls of that golden beard; and, in truth, the Sieur de Védène had the self-glorifying air and the abstracted look of men that queens have loved. On this day, in order to do honour to his native town, he had substituted for his Neapolitan clothes a tunic edged with pink, *à la Provençale*, and in his hood there quivered a tall feather of the Camargue ibis.

As soon as he entered the new official bowed with a gallant air, and approached the high portico where the Pope was waiting to give him the insignias of his rank, namely, a wooden spoon and a saffron coat. The mule was at the foot of the steps, saddled and bridled, all ready to go to the vineyard; as he passed beside her, Tistet Védène smiled pleasantly, and stopped to give her a friendly pat or two on the back, glancing, as he did so, out of the corner of his eye to see if the Pope noticed it. The position was just right, — the mule let fly her heels.

"There, take it, villain! Seven years have I kept it for thee!"

And she gave him so terrible a kick, — so terrible that even at Pampérigouste the smoke was

seen, a whirlwind of blond dust, in which flew the feather of an ibis, and that was all that remained of the unfortunate Tistet Védène!

Mule kicks are not usually so destructive; but this was a papal mule; and then, just think! she had kept it for him for seven years. There is no finer example of ecclesiastical rancour.

THE LIGHTHOUSE.

THAT night I could not sleep. The mistral was angry, and the roar of its great voice kept me awake till morning. The mill cracked, heavily swaying its mutilated wings, which whistled to the north wind like the shrouds of a ship. Tiles flew off the roof, and, afar, the serried pines with which the hill is covered waved and rustled in the shadows. I might have thought myself on the open sea. . .

All this reminded me of my beautiful insomnias three years ago, when I lived in the *phare des Sanguinaires* [lighthouse of the Sanguinaires], down there, off the Corsican coast, at the entrance of the gulf of Ajaccio, — one more pretty corner that I have found in which to dream and live alone.

Imagine a ruddy isle, savage of aspect; the lighthouse on one point, on the other an old Genoese tower, where, in my day, lived an eagle. Below, on the shore, was a ruined lazaretto, overgrown with herbage; and everywhere ravines, clusters of great rocks, a few wild goats, the little Corsican horses galloping about, their manes streaming in the wind; and above, far above, in a whirl of sea-birds, the house of the beacon, with its

platform of white masonry where the keepers walk up and down, its green arched doorway, and its cast-iron tower, at the top of which the great lantern with facets shines in the sun, giving light by day as well as by night. . . That is the Île des Sanguinaires, as I saw it again this wakeful night, while I listened to the snoring of my pines. It was in that enchanted isle that I shut myself up at times, before I came to my mill, when I needed the free air and solitude.

What did I do there?

Just what I do here, only less. When the mistral or the tramontana did not blow too hard, I lay between two rocks at the sea-level, amid the gulls and the petrels and the swallows, and there I stayed nearly all day long in that species of stupor and delightful dejection which comes with the contemplation of the sea. You know, don't you, that lovely intoxication of the soul? We do not think, we do not dream. All our being escapes us, flits away, is scattered. We are the gull that dives, the dust of foam that floats in the sunlight between two waves, the vapour of that steamer over there in the distance, that pretty little coral-boat with its ruddy sail, that pearl of the water, that flake of mist, — all, we are all, except ourself. Oh! what precious hours of semi-slumber and self-dispersion have I spent upon my island!

On the strong windy days when the shore was not tenable, I shut myself up in the quarantine courtyard, a melancholy little courtyard, fragrant with rosemary and wild absinthe; and there,

crouching in a projection of the old wall, I let myself be softly invaded by the vague essence of loneliness and sadness which floated with the sunshine into those stone cells, open at one end like ancient tombs. From time to time a gate would clap, a light spring bound upon the grass; 't was a goat coming in to browse under shelter from the wind. When she saw me she stopped abashed, and stood still, horns erect, air alert, looking at me with an infantine eye.

Toward five o'clock the trumpet of the keepers called me to dinner. Then I took a little path through the tangle of rock overhanging the sea, and went slowly up to the lighthouse, turning at every step to that vast horizon of water and light which seemed to enlarge the higher I went.

Above, it was charming. I still see that beautiful dining-room with broad tiles and oak panels, the *bouillabaisse* smoking in the middle of it, the door wide open to the white terrace, and the whole setting sun pouring in. The keepers were there, waiting until I came to sit down to table. There were three of them, a Marseillais and two Corsicans; all were small men, bearded, their faces tanned, fissured; wearing the same *pelone* — short, hooded cloak of goatskin — but each man had a gait and a temperament unlike the others.

By the way these men moved, one could instantly feel the difference between the two races. The Marseillais, industrious and lively, always busy, always in motion, roved the isle from morn-

ing till night, gardening, fishing, gathering the gulls' eggs, hiding in the rocks to catch a goat and milk her, and always with some *aioli* or *bouillabaisse* a-cooking.

The Corsicans, on the other hand, beyond their regular service, did absolutely nothing. They considered themselves functionaries, and passed their days in the kitchen playing interminable games of *scopa*, never interrupting them except to relight their pipes with a grave air, and to cut up into the hollow of their hands, with scissors, the big green tobacco-leaves.

In other respects, Marseillais and Corsicans, they were all three good fellows, simple, artless, full of attentions for their guest, though in their hearts they must have thought him a very extraordinary gentleman.

Just think! to come and shut himself up in a lighthouse for pleasure! They, who found the days so long, and felt so happy when their turn came to go ashore. In the summer season this great happiness was allowed them once a month. Ten days ashore for thirty days of lighthouse; that is the rule; but in winter and bad weather no rule holds good. The wind blows, the waves rise, the Sanguinaires are white with foam, and the keepers on duty are kept confined for two or three months together, and sometimes under terrible conditions.

"Here's what happened to me, monsieur," said old Bartoli one day as we were dining. "Here's what happened to me five years ago of a winter's

evening, at this very table where we are now. That night there were only two of us in the lighthouse, I and a comrade called Tchéco. The others were ashore, ill, or on their holiday, I forget which. We were finishing dinner, very quietly, when, all of a sudden, my comrade stopped eating, looked at me for a moment with such queer eyes, and, poof! he fell upon the table his arms stretched out. I ran to him, shook him, called him: —

"'O Tché! O Tché!'

"Not a word! he was dead. You can think what emotion. I stood more than an hour stupid and trembling before that corpse, then suddenly the thought came to me — the beacon! I had only time to climb to the lantern and light it before night fell. And what a night, monsieur! The sea, the wind did not have their natural voices. Every second it seemed to me that some one called me from below. And such fever! such thirst! But you could n't have made me go down — I was so frightened of death. However, by dawn, a little courage came back to me. I carried my comrade to his bed; a sheet above him, a bit of a prayer, and then, quick! the danger signal.

"Unfortunately, the sea ran high; in vain I called, called; no one came. And there I was, alone in the lighthouse with my poor Tchéco for God knows how long. I hoped to be able to keep him near me till the arrival of the boat; but after three days that was impossible. What should I do? Carry him outside? Bury him? The rock was too hard, and there are so many crows on the island. It

would have been a shame to abandon that Christian to their maws. Then I bethought me of taking him down to one of those cells of the lazaretto. It took me a whole afternoon to make that sad procession, and, I tell you, it needed courage, too. Do you know, monsieur, that even now when I go down on that side of the island in a high wind I fancy that I still have that corpse on my shoulders."

Poor old Bartoli! the perspiration stood out on his forehead for merely thinking of it.

Our meals were passed in chatting thus: the beacon, the sea, with tales of shipwreck and of Corsican pirates. Then as daylight faded, the keeper of the first watch lighted his lamp, took his pipe, his flask, a little red-edged Plutarch (the entire library of the Sanguinaires) and disappeared in the darkness. In a minute we heard in the depths below a rattle of chains and pulleys, and the heavy weights of a clock that was being wound up.

As for me during this time, I sat outside on the terrace. The sun, now very low, was descending quickly into the water, carrying the horizon with it. The wind freshened, the island became violet. In the sky, a big bird passed heavily quite near me; it was the eagle of the tower coming home. Little by little the sea-mist rose. Soon I could see only the white fringe round the isle. Suddenly, above my head, a soft flood of light gushed out. 'T was the beacon. Leaving the rest of the island in shadow, the clear broad ray fell full upon the water, and I was lost in darkness below that

luminous great flood, which scarcely spattered me in passing. . . But the wind is freshening still. I must go in. Feeling my way I enter and close the great door. I put up the iron bars; then, still feeling before me, I go up the cast-iron stairway, which trembles and sounds beneath my feet; and thus I reach the summit of the lighthouse. Here indeed is brilliancy.

Imagine a gigantic Carcel lamp with six rows of wicks, around which slowly revolve the sides of the lantern; some are filled with an enormous lens of crystal, others open on a stationary sash of glass which shelters the flame from the breeze. On entering, I was dazzled. The brasses, pewters, tin reflectors, the walls of convex crystal turning with those great bluish circles, all this glitter and clash of lights gave me a moment of giddiness.

Little by little, however, my eyes grew accustomed to the glare, and I seated myself at the foot of the lamp beside the keeper, who was reading his Plutarch aloud to keep himself from going to sleep.

Without, darkness, the abyss. On the little balcony which runs round the lantern the wind is rushing like a madman, howling. The lighthouse cracks, the sea roars. At the point of the isle, on the reefs, the waves make a noise like cannon. Invisible fingers rap now and then on the glass — some night-bird, allured by the light, which beats out its brains on the crystal. Within the warm and sparkling lantern nothing is heard but the crackling of the flame, the sound of the oil dropping, of the chain winding, and the monotonous

voice of the reader intoning the life of Demetrius of Phalaris.

At midnight the keeper rises, casts a final look at his wicks, and we both go down. On the stairway we meet the comrade of the second watch, who is coming up, rubbing his eyes. We pass him the flask and the Plutarch. Then before we seek our beds we go for a moment to the lower chamber, encumbered with chains, heavy weights, reserves of tin, of cordage, and there, by the gleam of his little lamp the keeper writes in the big book of the beacon, the log, always open: —

"Midnight. Heavy sea. Tempest. Ship in the offing."

THE WRECK OF THE "SÉMILLANTE."

As the mistral of the other night cast us on the Corsican coast let me tell you a terrible tale of the sea which the fishermen over there often relate in their night watches, and about which chance supplied me with very curious information.

It was two or three years ago that I was roving the Sea of Sardinia with six or seven custom-house sailors. A rough trip for a novice. Throughout the month of March we had but one fine day. The east wind pursued us and the sea never ceased to rage.

One night that we were running before the gale, our boat took shelter among a crowd of little islands at the entrance to the Straits of Bonifacio. The aspect of those islands was not engaging: great barren rocks covered with birds, a few tufts of absinthe, thickets of mastic-trees, and here and there in the swamps logs of wood in process of rotting. But for passing the night, i' faith those dangerous-looking rocks seemed safer than the cabin of a half-decked old boat where the sea entered as if it were at home; and so we were quite contented to go ashore.

We had barely landed and the sailors were lighting a fire to cook the *bouillabaisse*, when the skip-

per called me, and, said pointing to a little inclosure of white masonry almost hidden in the fog at the end of the island: —

"Will you come to the cemetery?"

"Cemetery, Captain Lionetti! Where are we, then?"

"At the Lavezzi Islands, monsieur. This is where the six hundred men of the 'Sémillante' are buried, exactly where their frigate was wrecked just ten years ago. Poor fellows! they don't have many visitors, and the least we can do is to say good-day to them, now we are here."

"With all my heart, captain."

How sad it was, that cemetery of the "Sémillante!" I see it still with its little low wall, its rusty iron door, hard to open, its silent chapel, and its hundreds of black crosses half-hidden by the grass. Not a crown of *immortelles*, not a souvenir! nothing. Ah! the poor abandoned dead, how cold they must be in those chance graves.

We remained a few moments on our knees. The skipper prayed aloud. Enormous gulls, sole guardians of the cemetery, circled above our heads, mingling their hoarse cries with the lamentations of the ocean.

The prayer ended, we returned sadly to the end of the island, where our boat was moored. During our absence the sailors had not lost their time. We found a great fire flaming in the shelter of a rock, and a smoking sauce-pan. Every one sat down in a circle, his feet to the flame, and each

received in a red earthen bowl two slices of black bread thoroughly steeped. The meal was silent; we were wet, we were hungry, and then, the neighbourhood of the cemetery! . . However, when the bowls were empty we lighted our pipes, and talk began. Naturally we spoke of the "Sémillante."

"But how did it happen?" I asked the skipper, who was gazing at the flames with a pensive air, his head in his hands.

"How did it happen?" replied the good Lionetti with a heavy sigh. "Alas! monsieur, no one in the world can tell you that. All we know is that the 'Sémillante,' carrying troops to the Crimea, sailed from Toulon one evening in bad weather. It grew worse at night. Wind, rain, and a sea the like of which was never seen. Towards morning the wind fell a little but the sea was wild, and with it a devilish cursèd fog in which you could n't see a light at four steps off. Those fogs, monsieur, you have no idea how treacherous they are. But for all that, my idea of the 'Sémillante' is that she lost her rudder that morning, for there 's no fog that holds on without lifting a little, and that captain of hers would have seen enough not to lay himself out on these rocks. He was an old salt and we all knew him. He had commanded the Corsica Station for three years and knew the coast as well as I who know nothing else."

"What time of day is it thought that the 'Sémillante' perished?"

"It must have been midday; yes, monsieur, just

midday. But goodness! with that sea-fog midday was no better than midnight. A custom-house man ashore told me that about half-past eleven on that day, coming out of his hut to fasten the shutters, his cap was carried off by the wind, and at the risk of being blown himself into the sea he scrambled after it along the shore on his hands and knees. You understand! custom-house folks are not rich, and caps cost dear. It seems that once when he raised his head he saw, quite close to him in the fog, a big ship under bare poles running before the wind toward the Lavezzi Islands. She went so fast, so fast that the man had scarcely time to see her. But every one believes she was the 'Sémillante,' for half an hour later a shepherd found her lying on these rocks. And here he is, monsieur, that shepherd, just as I am speaking of him, and he will tell you the thing himself. Good-day, Palombo! come and warm yourself a bit; don't be afraid."

A man in a hooded mantle whom I had noticed for the last few minutes hovering around our fire, and whom I thought to be one of the crew, being ignorant that a shepherd was on the island, now came forward timidly.

He was a leprous old fellow, three-quarters idiotic, the victim of some scorbutic disease which gave him thick swollen lips very horrible to see. The skipper made him understand with difficulty what we wanted of him, and then, raising with one finger his diseased lip, the old man related how on the day in question, being in his hut about midday,

he heard an awful crash upon the rocks. As the island was covered with water he could not leave the hut, and it was not until the next day that, on opening his door, he saw the shore piled up with wreckage and with corpses washed in by the sea. Horrified, he ran to his boat and went to Bonifacio in search of help.

Tired with having talked so much the shepherd sat down, and the skipper resumed the tale:—

"Yes, monsieur, that poor old fellow came to warn us. He was almost crazy with terror, and ever since then his brain has been off the track — and good reason, too. Imagine six hundred bodies in a heap on that beach, pell-mell with splintered woodwork and rags of sail. Poor 'Sémillante'! the sea had crushed her at one blow and torn her to such fragments that Palombo could scarcely find enough to build him a fence around his hut. As for the bodies, they were nearly all disfigured and horribly mutilated; it was piteous to see them grappling to one another. We found the captain in full uniform, and the chaplain with his stole round his neck; in a corner between two rocks, was a little cabin-boy with his eyes wide open; you might have thought he was alive, but no! It was written above that no one should escape —"

Here the skipper interrupted himself.

"Attention, Nardi!" he cried; "the fire is going out."

Nardi thereupon threw two or three tarred

planks upon the embers, which flamed up brightly, and Lionetti continued: —

"The saddest part of the whole story is this: Three weeks before the disaster a little corvette, on her way, like the 'Sémillante,' to the Crimea, was wrecked in the same way and almost at the same spot; only, that time we succeeded in saving the crew and twenty artillery men who were aboard. We took them to Bonifacio and kept them two days. But once dry and afoot, good-night and good-luck! the artillery men returned to Toulon, where, soon after, they were again embarked for the Crimea — guess on what ship? On the 'Sémillante' monsieur! We found them all, the whole twenty, lying among the dead just about where we now are. I myself picked up a pretty little corporal with a delicate moustache, a Paris dandy, whom I had had in my own house and who had kept us laughing the whole time with his tales. To see him lying here, dead, almost broke my heart. Ah! Santa Madre!"

Thereupon the worthy Lionetti, shaking the ashes from his pipe and rolling himself up in his hooded cloak wished me good-night. For some time longer the sailors talked together in low tones. Then, one after another, the pipes went out. No one spoke. The old shepherd went away. And I was left alone to dream in the midst of the sleeping crew.

Under the impression of the lugubrious tale I have just heard, I try to reconstruct in thought

the poor lost frigate and the story of the death-throes that the gulls alone had witnessed. Certain details which have struck my mind — the captain in full uniform, the chaplain's stole, the twenty artillery men — help me to divine the various vicissitudes of the drama. . . I see the frigate leaving Toulon at dusk . . . she comes out into the offing. The sea is rough, the wind terrible; but the captain is a valiant sailor, and every one aboard is confident. . .

In the morning the sea-fog rises. Uneasiness is felt. The crew are aloft. The captain does not quit the bridge. Below, where the soldiers are shut up, it is dark; the atmosphere is hot. Some are ill, lying with their heads upon their knapsacks. The ship rolls horribly; impossible to keep their feet. They talk as they sit, in groups on the floor, and clinging to the benches; they shout in order to be heard. A few are beginning to feel afraid. Shipwrecks are so frequent in these latitudes; the artillery men are there to say so, and what they tell is not reassuring. Their corporal especially, a Parisian, always jesting, though he makes your flesh creep with his jokes.

"Shipwreck? why, it is very amusing, a shipwreck. We shall get off with an icy bath, and they'll take us to Bonifacio; capital eating at old Lionetti's."

And his comrades laugh.

Suddenly, a crash. What's that? What has happened?

"The rudder has gone," says a dripping sailor, crossing between decks at a run.

"Bon voyage!" cries that incorrigible corporal, but no one laughs with him now.

Great tumult on deck. The fog obstructs all view. The sailors go and come, frightened, and feeling their way. . . No rudder! Impossible to work the ship! The "Sémillante," drifting, goes with the wind. It is then that the custom-house sailor sees her pass; it is half-past eleven o'clock. Ahead of the frigate something sounds like the roar of cannon. . . Breakers! breakers! 'T is over, all hope is gone, they are driving ashore. The captain goes down into his cabin. The next moment he returns to his place on the bridge, wearing his full uniform. He will meet death with dignity.

Between decks the soldiers look at one another anxiously, but say nothing. The sick ones try to rise; the corporal laughs no longer. It is then that the door opens and the chaplain in his stole appears upon the threshold.

"Kneel down, my sons."

They all obey. In a ringing voice the priest reads the prayer for the dying.

Suddenly an awful shock, a cry, a single cry, an immense cry, arms stretched out, hands that clutch, eyes aghast, o'er which the vision of death passes in a flash—

Oh, mercy! . .

It was thus that I spent the whole night in dreaming, in evoking, after a space of ten years, the soul

of that poor ship whose fragments surrounded me. Afar, in the straits, the storm was raging; the flame of the bivouac bent to the blast! and I heard our boat tossing below at the foot of the rocks and straining at her hawser.

CUSTOM-HOUSE PEOPLE.

A FEW years ago, the inspector-general of customs in Corsica took me on one of his rounds along the coast. Without seeming to be so, it was really a very long voyage. Forty days at sea, almost as long as it takes to go to Havana, and this in an old boat with a half-deck where nothing sheltered us from wind, waves, and rain but a little tarred roof scarcely large enough to cover two berths and a table. It was a sight to see the sailors in bad weather. Their faces streamed; their soaked jackets smoked like linen in the drying-room. In mid-winter the poor fellows passed whole days in this condition, and even nights, crouched on their wet benches, shivering in that unhealthy dampness; for it was quite impossible to light a fire on board and the shore was sometimes difficult to reach. Well, not a single one of those men complained. In the roughest weather I always saw them just as placid, and in just the same good-humour. And yet, what a melancholy life it is, that of custom-house sailors!

Nearly all of them are married, with wife and children ashore, yet they stay months at sea, cruising

around those dangerous coasts. By way of food they have nothing but damp bread and wild onions. Never wine or meat, for wine and meat cost dear and all they earn is five hundred francs a year. Five hundred francs a year! you can imagine what the hovel must be on the Marina and whether the children go barefoot. No matter! they all seem happy, those people. In front of the cabin, aft, stood a great cask of rain-water, at which the crew drank; and I remember that when they had taken their last swallow, each of the poor devils shook out his glass with an "Ah!" of satisfaction, an expression of comfort both comical and affecting.

The gayest and most contented of all was a little Bonifacian, squat and swarthy, called Palombo. He was always singing, even in the worst weather. When the waves were high and the sky, dark and lowering, was full of sleet, and all were standing, their noses in the air, hands to the sheet, watching the coming gust, then, in the great silence and anxiety of all on board, the tranquil voice of Palombo would begin: —

"*Non, monseigneur,*
C'est trop d'honneur,
Lisette est sa-age,
Reste au villa-age."

And the squall might blow, shaking and submerging the vessel and making the rigging moan, the sailor's song continued, floating like a gull on the breast of the waves. Sometimes the wind played too strong an accompaniment and the

words were drowned; but between each dash of the seas as the water ran out of the scuppers, the chorus was heard again: —

"*Lisette est sa-age,*
Reste au villa-age."

One day, however, it rained and blew so hard I did not hear it. This was so extraordinary that I put my head out of the cabin. "Hey! Palombo, why don't you sing?" Palombo did not answer. He was motionless, lying on his bench. I went out to him. His teeth were chattering; his whole body trembled with fever. "He has got the *pountoura*," said his comrades, sadly. What they called *pountoura* is a stitch in the side, a pleurisy. The great leaden sky, the streaming vessel, the poor feverish soul wrapped in an old india-rubber coat which glistened in the rain like a seal's back — I never saw anything more lugubrious. Soon the cold, the wind, the dashing of the waves aggravated his trouble. Delirium seized him; it was necessary to put him ashore.

After much time and many efforts we entered, towards evening, a little harbour, silent and barren, where nothing stirred but the circular sweep of a few gulls. Around the shore rose high, scarped rocks and impermeable thickets of shrubs of a dull green, perennial and without season. Low down, near the water, was a little white house with gray shutters, the custom-house post. In the midst of this desert, the government building, numbered like a uniform cap, had something sinister about it.

There poor Palombo was put ashore. Melancholy haven for a sick man. We found the custom-house official in charge of the place supping with his wife and children in the chimney-corner. All these people had haggard, yellow faces, and large eyes circled with fever. The mother, still young, with a baby in her arms, shivered as she spoke to us. "It is a terrible post," the inspector said to me in a low voice. "We are obliged to renew our men here every two years. The fever of that marsh eats them up."

It was necessary to get a doctor. There was none nearer than Sartena, and that was six or eight leagues distant. What was to be done? Our sailors were tired out and could do no more, and it was too far to send a child. Then the wife, looking out of the door, called "Cecco! Cecco!" and a tall, well set-up young fellow entered, true type of a smuggler or a bandit, with his brown woollen cap and his goatskin mantle. As we landed I had noticed him sitting before the door, his red pipe in his mouth and his gun between his legs; but he disappeared, I knew not why, at our approach. Perhaps he thought gendarmes were with us. As he entered, the wife coloured a little. "This is my cousin," she said. "No danger that he will get lost in the thicket." Then she spoke to him in a low voice and showed him the patient. The man nodded without replying, went out, whistled to his dog, and started, his gun on his shoulder, springing from rock to rock with his long legs.

During this time the children, whom the presence of the inspector seemed to terrify, finished their dinner of chestnuts and *bruccio* (white cheese). Water, nothing but water on the table! And yet what good a drop of wine would have done them, poor little things. Ah, poverty! . . At last the mother took them up to bed; the father lighted his lantern and went to inspect the coast, and we sat still by the fire to watch our sick man, who tossed on his pallet as if at sea shaken by the waves. To quiet his *pountoura* a little we warmed pebbles and bricks and laid them at his side. Once or twice when I approached his bed the poor fellow knew me, and to thank me stretched out his hand with difficulty, a large hand, rough and burning as one of those bricks we took from the fire.

Sad watch! Outside, the bad weather had returned with the close of day. All was uproar, the rolling of waves, the dashing of spray, the battle of rocks and water. From time to time the tempest on the open sea succeeded in entering the bay and swirling around the house. We felt it in the sudden rise of the flame which lighted the mournful faces of the sailors grouped around the chimney and looking at the fire with that placidity of expression given by the habitual presence of great expanse and far horizons. Sometimes Palombo gently moaned; and then all eyes were turned to the dark corner where the poor comrade was dying far from his family and without succour; the chests heaved and I heard great sighs. That was all that the sense of their unfortunate lot drew from these

gentle and patient toilers of the sea. A sigh, and nothing more! Stay, I am wrong. Passing before me to throw a clod on the fire, one of them said in a low and heart-breaking voice: "You see monsieur, we have sometimes great troubles in our business."

THE CURÉ OF CUCUGNAN.

EVERY year at Candlemas the Provençal poets publish at Avignon a jovial little book full to the brim of merry tales and pretty verses. That of this year has just reached me, and in it I find an adorable *fabliau* which I shall try to translate for you, slightly abridging it. Parisians! hold out your sacks. It is the finest brand of Provençal flour that I serve you this day.

The Abbé Martin was curé of Cucugnan.

Good as bread, honest as gold, he loved his Cucugnanese paternally. To him, Cucugnan would have been heaven upon earth if the Cucugnanese had given him a little more satisfaction. But alas! the spiders spun their webs in his confessional, and on the glorious Easter-day the Host remained in the holy pyx. This harrowed the heart of the worthy priest, and he was always asking God to grant that he might not die until he had brought back to the fold his scattered flock.

Now you shall see how God listened to him.

One Sunday, after the Gospel, M. Martin went up into the pulpit.

"Brethren," he said, "you may believe me if you like: the other night I found myself, I, a miserable sinner, at the gates of Paradise.

"I rapped; Saint Peter came.

"'Bless me! is it you, my worthy Monsieur Martin?' he said to me. 'What good wind has brought you? what can I do for you?'

"'Great Saint Peter, you who hold the big book and the keys, would you tell me, if I am not too curious, how many Cucugnanese you have in Paradise?'

"'I can't refuse you anything, Monsieur Martin; sit down; we will look the thing out together.'

"And Saint Peter got out his big book, opened it, and put on his spectacles.

"'Let me see: Cucugnan, did you say? Cu . . . Cu . . . Cucugnan. Here we are, Cucugnan. . . My dear Monsieur Martin, it is a blank page. Not a soul. . . No more Cucugnanese in Paradise than fishbones in a turkey.'

"'What! No one from Cucugnan here? No one? It is n't possible! Do look again.'

"'No one, holy man. Look yourself if you think I am joking.'

"'I, *pécaïre!*' I stamped my feet and I cried for mercy with clasped hands. Whereupon Saint Peter said: —

"'Monsieur Martin, you must not turn your heart inside out in this way, or you'll have a fit of some kind. It is n't your fault, after all. Those Cucugnanese of yours, don't you see, they 'll have to do their quarantine in purgatory.'

"'Oh! for pity's sake, great Saint Peter, let me just go to purgatory for a minute to see them and comfort them.'

"'Willingly, my friend. . . Here, put on these sandals, for the roads are none too good. That's right. Now go straight before you. Don't you see a turning a long way down? There you'll find a silver door all studded with black crosses — on your right. Knock, and they'll open to you. Adieu! Keep well and lively.'

"Down I went — down, down! What a struggle! My flesh creeps for only thinking of it. A narrow path, full of briers and big shiny beetles and snakes hissing, brought me to the silver door.

"Pan! pan!

"'Who knocks?' said a hoarse and dismal voice.

"'The curé of Cucugnan.'

"'Of —?'

"'Of Cucugnan.'

"'Ah! . . Come in.'

"I went in. A tall, handsome angel with wings black as night and a garment resplendent as day, and a diamond key hanging to his belt, was writing, cra-cra, in a big book — bigger than that of Saint Peter.

"'Now then, what do you want?' asked the angel.

"'Noble angel of God, I want to know — perhaps you'll think me very inquisitive — whether my Cucugnanese are here.'

"'Your —?'

"'Cucugnanese, the inhabitants of Cucugnan. I am their prior.'

"'Ah, yes! the Abbé Martin, isn't it?'

"'At your service, Monsieur Angel.'

"'You say Cucugnan—'

"And the angel opened his big book, wetting his finger with his spittle to turn the leaves easily.

"'Cucugnan,' he said, with a heavy sigh. 'Monsieur Martin, we have n't a soul in purgatory from Cucugnan.'

"'Jesu! Marie! Joseph! not a soul from Cucugnan in purgatory! Then, great God! where are they?'

"'Eh! holy man! they are in paradise. Where the deuce do you suppose they are?'

"'But I have just come from there, from paradise.'

"'You have come from there! Well?'

"'They are not there! . . Ah! merciful mother of angels! . .'

"'But, holy man, if they are not in paradise and not in purgatory, there is no middle place, they are in—'

"'Holy Cross! Jesus, son of David! Aië! aië! aië! it is n't possible? Can it be that the great Saint Peter lied to me? I did n't hear a cock crow. . . Aië! poor people! and poor me! for how can I go to paradise if my Cucugnanese are not there?'

"'Listen to me, my poor Monsieur Martin. As you want to be so sure about this thing, cost what it may, and to see with your own eyes what there is to it, take this path and run fast, if you

know how to run. You will come to a great big portal on your left. There you can find out everything. God grants it.'

"And the angel shut his gate.

"'T was a long path, paved all the way with red embers. I tottered as if I were drunk; at every step I stumbled; I was bathed in perspiration; every hair of my body had its drop of sweat; I panted with thirst. But thanks to the sandals that good Saint Peter lent me, I did not burn my feet.

"After I had made many a limping misstep I saw at my left hand a gate — no, a portal, an enormous portal, gaping wide open, like the door of a big oven. O! my children, what a sight! *There*, no one asked my name; *there*, no register. In batches, in crowds, people entered, just as you, my brethren, go to the wineshops on Sunday.

"I sweated great drops, and yet I was chilled to the bone and shuddering. My hair stood erect. I smelt burning, roasting flesh, something like the smell that fills all Cucugnan when Eloy the blacksmith burns the hoof of an old donkey as he shoes her. I lost my breath in that stinking, fiery air; I heard an awful clamour, moans, howls, oaths.

"'Well! are you, or are you *not* coming in, you?' said a hornèd demon, pricking me with his pitchfork.

"'I? I don't go in there. I am a friend of God.'

"'A friend of God! Hey! you scabby rascal! what are you doing here?'

"'I have come — ah! I can't talk of it, my legs

are giving way under me. I have come — I have come a long way — to humbly ask you — if — if by chance — you have here — some one — some one from Cucugnan — '

" ' Ha! fire of God! you are playing stupid, are you? Just as if you did n't know that all Cucugnan is here. There, you ugly crow, look there, and see how we treat 'em here, your precious Cucugnanese — '

" I looked, and saw, in the midst of awful, whirling flames, —

" That long Coq-Galine, — you all knew him, my brethren, — Coq-Galine, who got drunk so often and shook his fleas on his poor Clairette.

" I saw Catarinet — that little slut with her nose in the air — who slept alone in the barn — you remember, you rascals? But that 's enough — enough said.

" I saw Pascal Doigt-de-Pois who made his oil of M. Julien's olives.

" I saw Babette the gleaner, who, when she gleaned, grabbed handfuls from the sheaves to fill her bundle.

" I saw Maître Grabasi, who oiled the wheel of his barrow so slick;

" And Dauphine, who sold the water of his well so dear;

" And Tortillard, who, when he met me carrying the Good God, kept on his way as if he had only met a dog, — pipe in his mouth, cap on his head, proud as Artaban.

"And I saw Coulau with his Zette, and Jacques, and Pierre, and Toni. . . "

Livid with fear, the audience groaned, beholding, through the opened gates of hell, this one his father, that one her mother, some their grandmothers, some their brothers and sisters.

"You feel now, my brethren," said the good abbé, "that this must not go on any longer. I have the charge of souls, and I wish to save you, I *will* save you, from the abyss to which you are all rolling head-foremost. To-morrow I shall set to work—no later than to-morrow. And I shall have my hands full. This is what I shall do. In order to do it well, it must be done methodically. We will go row by row, as at Jonquières when you dance.

"To-morrow, Monday, I shall confess the old men and the old women. That 's nothing.

"Tuesday, the children. Soon done.

"Wednesday, the lads and lasses. May take long.

"Thursday, the men. Cut them short.

"Friday, the women. I shall say: No rigmaroles.

"Saturday, the miller! One whole day is not too much for him alone.

"And Sunday it will all be done, and we shall be happy.

"You know, my children, that when the wheat is ripe it must be cut; when the wine is drawn it must be drunk. Here 's a lot of dirty linen to wash, and it must be washed, and well washed.

"That is the good I wish you. Amen."

What was said was done. The wash came off. And since that memorable Sunday the fragrance of the virtues of Cucugnan can be smelt in an area of ten leagues round.

And the good pastor, M. Martin, happy and gay, dreamed the other night that, followed by his whole flock, he mounted, in resplendent procession, amid gleaming torches, and clouds of incense wafted by the choir-boys chanting the Te Deum, the great lighted road to the City of our God.

Now there 's the tale of the curé of Cucugnan, such as that great rascal Roumanille ordered me to tell it to you; he himself having got it from some other good fellow.

AGED FOLK.

"A LETTER, Père Azan?"

"Yes, monsieur; and it comes from Paris."

He was quite proud, that worthy old Azan, that it came from Paris. I was not. Something told me that that Parisian missive from the rue Jean-Jacques, dropping thus upon my table unexpectedly, and so early in the morning, would make me lose my whole day. I was not mistaken, — and you shall see why.

"You must do me a service, my friend," said the letter. "Close your mill for a day, and go to Eyguières. Eyguières is a large village, three or four leagues from your mill, — a pleasant walk. When you get there, ask for the Orphans' Convent. The first house beyond the convent is a low building with gray shutters, and a small garden behind it. Enter without knocking, — the door is always open, — and as you enter, call out very loud: 'Good-day, worthy people! I am a friend of Maurice.' On which you will see two little old persons — oh! but old, old, ever so old — stretching out their hands to you from their big arm-chairs; and you are to kiss them for me, with all your heart, as if they were yours, your own friends. Then you will talk. They will talk to you of me,

and nothing else; they will say a lot of foolish things, which you are to listen to without laughing. You won't laugh, will you? They are my grandparents; two beings whose very life I am, and who have not seen me these ten years. . . Ten years, a long time! But how can I help it? Paris clutches me. And they, they are so old that if they came to see me they would break to bits on the way. . . Happily, you are there, my dear miller, and, in kissing you, these poor old people will fancy they are kissing me. I have so often told them about you, and of the good friendship that—"

The devil take good friendship! Just this very morning, when the weather is so beautiful! but not at all fit to tramp along the roads; too much mistral, too much sun, a regular Provence day. When that cursèd letter came, I had just picked out my shelter between two rocks, where I dreamed of staying all day like a lizard, drinking light and listening to the song of the pines. Well, I could not help myself. I shut up the mill, grumbling, and hid the key. My stick, my pipe, and off I went.

I reached Eyguières in about two hours. The village was deserted; everybody was in the fields. From the elms in the courtyards, white with dust, the grasshoppers were screaming. To be sure, in the square before the mayor's office, a donkey was sunning himself, and a flock of pigeons were dabbling in the fountain before the church, but no one able to show me the Orphans' Convent. Happily,

an old witch suddenly appeared, crouching and knitting in the angle of her doorway. I told her what I was looking for; and as she was a witch of very great power, she had only to raise her distaff, and, behold! the Orphans' Convent rose up before me. It was a large, sullen, black house, proud of exhibiting above its arched portal an old cross of red freestone with Latin around it. Beside this house, I saw another, very small; gray shutters, garden behind it. I knew it directly, and I entered without knocking.

All my life I shall remember that long, cool, quiet corridor, the walls rose-tinted, the little garden quivering at the other end, and seen through a thin blind. It seemed to me that I was entering the house of some old bailiff of the olden time of Sedaine. At the end of the passage, on the left, through a half-opened door, I heard the tick-tack of a large clock and the voice of a child — a child in school — who was reading aloud, and pausing at each syllable: "Then—Saint—I–re–ne–us — cri–ed — out—I—am — the — wheat— of — the Lord—I—must— be —ground —by — the — teeth —of—these—an–i–mals." I softly approached the door and looked in.

In the quiet half-light of a little room, an old, old man with rosy cheeks, wrinkled to the tips of his fingers, sat sleeping in a chair, his mouth open, his hands on his knees. At his feet, a little girl dressed in blue — with a great cape and a linen cap, the orphans' costume — was reading the life of Saint Irenæus in a book that was bigger than

herself. The reading had operated miraculously on the entire household. The old man slept in his chair, the flies on the ceiling, the canaries in their cage at the window, and the great clock snored: tick-tack, tick-tack. Nothing was awake in the room but a broad band of light, which came, straight and white, between the closed shutters, full of lively sparkles and microscopic whirlings.

Amid this general somnolence, the child went gravely on with her reading: —

"Im–me–di–ate–ly—two—li–ons—dart–ed—up-on—him—and—ate—him—up." At this moment I entered the room. The lions of Saint Irenæus darting into the room could not have produced greater stupefaction. A regular stage effect! The little one gave a cry, the big book fell, the flies and the canaries woke, the clock struck, the old man started up, quite frightened, and I myself, being rather troubled, stopped short on the sill of the door, and called out very loud: "Good-day, worthy people! I am Maurice's friend."

Oh, then! if you had only seen him, that old man, if you had only seen how he came to me with outstretched arms, embracing me, pressing my hands, and wandering about the room, crying out: —

"*Mon Dieu! mon Dieu!*"

All the wrinkles of his face were laughing. He was red. He stuttered: —

"Ah! monsieur — ah! monsieur."

Then he went to the back of the room and called: —

"Mamette!"

A door opened, a trot of mice in the corridor—it was Mamette. Nothing prettier than that little old woman with her mob-cap, her brown gown, and the embroidered handkerchief which she held in her hand in the olden fashion. Most affecting thing! the two were like each other. With a false front and yellow bows to his cap, he too might be called Mamette. Only, the real Mamette must have wept a great deal in her life, for she was even more wrinkled than he. Like him, she too had an orphan with her, a little nurse in a blue cape who never left her; and to see these old people protected by those orphans was indeed the most touching thing you can imagine.

On entering, Mamette began to make me a deep curtsey, but a word of the old man stopped her in the middle of it:—

"A friend of Maurice."

Instantly she trembled, she wept, dropped her handkerchief, grew red, very red, redder than he. Those aged folk! who have hardly a drop of blood in their veins, how it flies to their face at the least emotion!

"Quick, quick, a chair," said the old lady to her little girl.

"Open the shutters," said the old man to his.

Then taking me each by a hand they led me, trotting along, to the window the better to see me. The armchairs were placed; I sat between the two on a stool, the little Blues behind us, and the questioning began:—

"How is he? What is he doing? Why does n't he come? Is he happy?"

Patati, patata! and so on for two hours.

I answered as best I could all their questions, giving such details about my friend as I knew, and boldly inventing others that I did not know; being careful to avoid admitting that I had never noticed whether his windows closed tightly and what coloured paper he had on his walls.

"The paper of his bedroom? blue, madame, light blue, with garlands of flowers — "

"Really!" said the old lady, much affected; then she added, turning to her husband: "He is such a dear lad!"

"Yes, yes! a dear lad!" said the other, with enthusiasm.

And all the time that I was speaking they kept up between them little nods, and sly laughs and winks, and knowing looks; or else the old man came closer to say in my ear: —

"Speak louder, she is a little hard of hearing."

And she on her side: —

"A little louder, if you please. He does n't hear very well."

Then I raised my voice, and both of them thanked me with a smile; and in those faded smiles, — bending toward me, seeking in the depths of my eyes the image of their Maurice, — I was, myself, quite moved to see that image, vague, veiled, almost imperceptible, as if I beheld my friend smiling to me from afar through a mist

Suddenly the old man sat upright in his chair.

"I have just thought, Mamette, — perhaps he has not breakfasted!"

And Mamette, distressed, throws up her arms.

"Not breakfasted! oh, heavens!"

I thought they were still talking of Maurice, and I was about to say that that worthy lad never waited later than noon for his breakfast. But no, it was of me they were thinking; and it was indeed a sight to see their commotion when I had to own that I was still fasting.

"Quick! set the table, little Blues! That table in the middle of the room — the Sunday cloth — the flowered plates. And no laughing, if you please! Make haste, make haste!"

And haste they made. Only time to break three plates and breakfast was served.

"A good little breakfast," said Mamette, leading me to the table; "only, you must eat it alone. We have eaten already."

Poor old people! at whatever hour you took them, they had "eaten already."

Mamette's good little breakfast was a cup of milk, dates, and a *barquette*, a kind of shortcake, no doubt enough to feed her canaries for a week; and to think that I, alone, I ate up all their provisions! I felt the indignation around the table; the little Blues whispered and nudged each other; and those canaries in their cage, — I knew they were saying: "Oh! that monsieur, he is eating up the whole of the *barquette!*"

I did eat it all, truly, almost without perceiving

that I did so, preoccupied as I was by looking round that light and placid room, where floated, as it were, the fragrance of things ancient. Especially noticeable were two little beds from which I could not detach my eyes. Those beds, almost two cradles, I pictured them in the morning at dawn, still inclosed within their great fringed curtains. Three o'clock strikes. That is the hour when old people wake.

"Are you asleep, Mamette?"

"No, my friend."

"Is n't Maurice a fine lad?"

"Yes, yes, a fine lad."

And from that I imagined a long conversation by merely looking at the little beds of the two old people, standing side by side.

During this time a terrible drama was going on at the other end of the room before a closet. It concerned reaching up to the top shelf for a certain bottle of brandied cherries which had awaited Maurice's return for the last ten years. The old people now proposed to open it for me. In spite of Mamette's supplications the husband was determined to get the cherries himself, and, mounted on a chair to the terror of his wife, he was striving to reach them. You can see the scene from here: the old man trembling on the points of his toes, the little Blues clinging to his chair, Mamette behind him, breathless, her arms extended, and, pervading all, a slight perfume of bergamot exhaled from the open closet and the great piles of unbleached linen therein contained. It was charming.

At last, after many efforts, they succeeded in getting it from the closet, that famous bottle, and with it an old silver cup, Maurice's cup when he was little. This they filled with cherries to the brim — Maurice was so fond of cherries! And while the old man served me, he whispered in my ear, as if his mouth watered: —

"You are very lucky, you, to be the one to eat them. My wife put them up. You 'll taste something good."

Alas! his wife had put them up, but she had forgotten to sweeten them. They were atrocious, your cherries, my poor Mamette — But that did not prevent me from eating them all without blinking.

The meal over, I rose to take leave of my hosts. They would fain have kept me longer to talk of that dear lad, but the day was shortening, the mill was far, and I had to go.

The old man rose when I did.

"Mamette, my coat; I will accompany him as far as the square."

I felt very sure that in her heart Mamette thought it too cool for the old man to be out, but she did not show it. Only, as she helped him to put his arms into the sleeves of his coat, a handsome snuff-coloured coat with mother-of-pearl buttons, I heard the dear creature say to him softly: —

"You won't be late, will you?"

And he, with a roguish air: —

"Hey! hey! I don't know — perhaps not."

Thereupon they looked at each other, laughing, and the little Blues laughed to see them laugh, and the canaries laughed too, in their cage, after their fashion. Between ourselves I think the smell of those cherries had made them all a little tipsy.

Daylight was fading as we left the house, grandpapa and I. A little Blue followed at a distance to bring him back; but he did not see her, and seemed quite proud to walk along, arm in arm with me, like a man. Mamette, beaming, watched us from the sill of her door with pretty little nods of her head that seemed to say: "See there! my poor man, he can still walk about."

PROSE BALLADS.

WHEN I opened my door this morning I saw around my mill a carpet of hoar-frost. The turf cracked and glittered like glass; the hillside shivered. For a single day my dear Provence disguised herself as a Northern land; and it was among pines draped with frost and tufts of lavender looking like crystal bouquets that I wrote two ballads of rather Germanic fantasy, while the ice-dew sparkled before me, and away up there in the clear blue sky triangular flocks of storks, coming from the country of Henri Heine, flew towards the Camargue, crying hoarsely: "It is cold — cold — cold."

I.

THE DEATH OF THE DAUPHIN.

THE little Dauphin is ill; the little Dauphin will die. In all the churches of the kingdom the Holy Sacrament is exposed day and night, and great tapers burn for the recovery of the royal child. The streets of the old Residenz are sad and silent; the bells no longer ring; carriages are driven at a foot-pace. Around the palace anxious burghers watch, through the iron railings, the Swiss porters

with gilded paunches talking in the courtyard with airs of importance.

The whole castle is a-quiver. Chamberlains, majordomos are running up and down the marble staircases. The galleries are filled with pages and courtiers in silken garments going from one group to another, asking for news in whispers. On the wide porticos ladies of honour in despair are dropping deep curtseys to one another and wiping their eyes with embroidered handkerchiefs.

In the Orangery is a numerous assemblage of physicians in their robes. They are seen through the sashes to shake their long black sleeves and lean their clubbed wigs doctorally to one another. The preceptor and the equerry of the little Dauphin are pacing up and down before the door awaiting the decision of the Faculty. Scullions pass them without bowing. The equerry swears like a pagan; the preceptor recites Horace. And all this while, from the stables over there, comes a plaintive neigh. 'T is the chestnut pony of the little Dauphin, forgotten by the grooms, which is whinnying sadly before its empty manger.

And the king? Where is Monseigneur the king? The king is shut up all alone in a room at the farther end of the castle. Majesties do not like to be seen to weep. As for the queen, that is another thing. Seated by the pillow of the little Dauphin, her beautiful face is bathed in tears, and she sobs aloud as any shopkeeper's wife might do.

Among the laces of his couch the little Dauphin,

whiter than the pillows on which he lies, is resting, his eyes closed. They think he sleeps. But no, the little Dauphin is not asleep. He turns to his mother, and seeing her tears, he says to her: —

"*Madame la reine*, why do you weep? Do you really think I am going to die?"

The queen tries to answer. Sobs prevent her from speaking.

"Do not weep, *Madame la reine;* you forget that I am the Dauphin, and that Dauphins cannot die in this way."

The queen sobs more than ever, and the little Dauphin begins to be frightened.

"Holà!" he said, "I will not let Death take me; I will find a way to keep him out. Send, at once, for forty of my soldiers, the strongest men; let them mount guard around my bed. Let a hundred cannon be ready, day and night, with lighted matches, beneath my windows, and sorrow to Death if then he dare approach me!"

To please the royal child the queen made signs. Cannon were heard to roll into the courtyard, and the forty tallest soldiers, halberds in hand, stood ranged around the room. They were all old veterans, with gray moustaches. The Dauphin clapped his hands on seeing them. One he recognized, and called to him: —

"Lorrain! Lorrain!"

The soldier advanced toward the bed.

"I love you, my old Lorrain. Show me your big sabre. If Death comes here to take me, you must kill him — won't you?"

Lorrain replied: —

"Yes, monseigneur."

But two big tears rolled down his weather-beaten cheeks.

At this moment the chaplain approached the little Dauphin, and spoke to him in a low voice, showing him a crucifix. The little Dauphin listened with a surprised air; then, suddenly interrupting the priest, he said: —

"I understand very well what you are saying, *Monsieur l'abbé;* but, after all, could not my little friend Beppo die in my place if I gave him plenty of money?"

The chaplain continued to speak in a low voice, and the little Dauphin seemed more and more astonished.

When the chaplain had finished, the little Dauphin said, with a heavy sigh: —

"All that you tell me is very sad, *Monsieur l'abbé,* but one thing comforts me; it is that up there, in the paradise of stars, I shall still be the Dauphin. I know that the Good God is my cousin, and he will not fail to treat me according to my rank."

Then he added, turning to his mother: —

"Tell them to bring me my finest clothes, my ermine mantle, and my velvet shoes. I wish to make myself gorgeous for the angels and to enter paradise as the Dauphin should."

Again, for the third time, the chaplain leaned down to the little Dauphin and spoke to him in a low voice. Suddenly, in the middle of his discourse the royal child interrupted him angrily: —

"Then to be Dauphin," he cried, "is just nothing at all!"

And — not willing to hear another word — the little Dauphin turned his face to the wall and wept bitterly.

II.

THE SUB-PREFECT IN THE FIELDS.

THE sub-prefect is on his rounds. Coachman before, footman behind, the calèche of the sub-prefecture bears him majestically to the district assembly of Combe-aux-Fées. For this memorable journey the sub-prefect has put on his fine embroidered coat, his little opera-hat, his tight breeches that are silver-striped, and his gala sword with a mother-of-pearl handle. On his knees reposes a great portfolio of crinkled leather, at which he gazes sadly.

The sub-prefect gazes sadly at his leather case; he thinks of the famous speech he is about to deliver before the inhabitants of Combe-aux-Fées: —

"Messieurs, and dear constituents —"

But in vain does he twist the silk of his blond moustache and repeat a score of times: —

"Messieurs, and dear constituents —"

Not another word will come. It is so hot in that calèche. The high-road to Combe-aux-Fées stretches dustily as far as eye can reach beneath that Southern sun. The air is like a furnace; on the elms, white with dust, that line the road, thou-

sands of grasshoppers are discoursing shrilly from one tree to another. Suddenly the sub-prefect quivers. Over there, at the foot of a slope, he perceives a little wood of live-oaks which seems to be making him a sign.

The little wood of live-oaks seems to be making him a sign: —

"Come this way, monsieur, come this way to compose your speech; you will be much more comfortable under my trees."

The sub-prefect is persuaded. He jumps from his calèche and tells his servants to wait for him; he is going to compose his speech in the little wood of live-oaks.

In the little wood of live-oaks there are birds and violets, and brooks purling through the turf. When the birds caught sight of the prefect in his handsome breeches carrying his leather case they were frightened and stopped singing, the brooks dared not purl, and the violets hid in the grass. All that little world had never seen a sub-prefect, and they asked one another in whispers who the grand gentleman could be who walked about in silver-laced breeches.

Whispering beneath the leafage, they asked one another who that grand gentleman in the silver-laced breeches could be. During this time the sub-prefect, delighted with the silence and the coolness of the wood, lifted the tails of his coat, laid his opera-hat on the grass, and sat himself down in the moss at the foot of a fine young live-oak. Then he opened his leather portfolio and

took therefrom a very large sheet of ministerial paper.

"He is an artist," said a redwing.

"No," said a bullfinch, "he is not an artist because he wears silvered breeches; he is a prince."

"Neither prince nor artist," interrupted an old nightingale who had sung in the gardens of the sub-prefecture for one whole season. "I know who he is — he is a sub-prefect."

And all the little wood began to whisper and murmur: —

"He 's a sub-prefect! he 's a sub-prefect!"

"How bald he is!" observed a lark with a big tuft.

The violets asked: —

"Is he cross?"

"Is he cross?" asked the violets.

The nightingale answered: —

"Not at all."

On this assurance the birds began to sing, the brooks to purl, the violets to exhale their fragrance just as if the monsieur were not there.

Impassible in the midst of the pretty racket, the sub-prefect sat invoking in his heart the Muse of agricultural comitias, and he presently began, with pencil uplifted, to declaim his speech in his voice of ceremony.

"Messieurs, and dear constituents —"

"Messieurs, and dear constituents," said the sub-prefect, in his voice of ceremony.

A burst of laughter interrupted him; he turned round and saw nothing but a green woodpecker,

perched on his opera-hat, which looked at him smiling. The sub-prefect shrugged his shoulders, and attempted to resume his speech; but the woodpecker stopped him again, crying out: —

"What's the good?"

"What is the good?" said the sub-prefect, becoming very red. Then waving away with a gesture that insolent beast, he began once more: —

"Messieurs, and dear constituents —"

"Messieurs, and dear constituents," resumed the sub-prefect.

But just then, all the little violets raised their heads to the tops of their stalks and said to him softly: —

"Monsieur, do smell how good we smell."

And the brooks purled a music divine in the mosses; and above, in the branches over his head, the red-throated warblers were singing their prettiest tunes, as if the whole little wood had conspired to prevent him from composing his speech.

Yes, the whole little wood had conspired to prevent him from composing his speech. The sub-prefect, tipsy with perfume and drunk with music, tried in vain to resist the new spell that seized him. He leaned his elbows on the grass, unbuttoned his fine lace coat, and stammered again two or three times: —

"Messieurs, and dear —"

Then he sent his dear constituents to the devil, and the Muse of agricultural comitias was forced to veil her face.

Veil thy face, O Muse of agricultural comitias! When at the end of an hour the servants of the sub-prefecture, uneasy about their master, entered the little wood, they saw a sight that caused them to recoil with horror. The sub-prefect was lying on his stomach in the grass, his clothes loose, his coat off, as disorderly as a bohemian, and — all the while chewing violets — he, the sub-prefect, was writing poetry!

BIXIOU'S PORTFOLIO.

ONE morning in the month of October, a few days before leaving Paris, a man entered my room while I was at breakfast, an old man in a shabby, muddy coat, his spine bent, and trembling on his long legs like an unfledged heron. This was Bixiou. Yes, Parisians, your Bixiou, the malicious, fascinating Bixiou, — that frantic jester, who delighted you for fifteen years with his pamphlets and his caricatures. Ah! the poor fellow, what distress! Were it not for a grimace he made as he entered the room I should never have recognized him.

With his head bent sideways to his shoulder, a cane at his teeth like a flute, the illustrious and lugubrious jester advanced to the middle of the room, striking against my table, and saying in a doleful voice: —

"Have pity on a poor blind man!"

The mimicry was so good that I could not help laughing. But he, very coldly: —

"You think I am joking — look!"

And he turned to me a pair of white eyes, sightless.

"I am blind, my dear fellow, blind for life. That is what comes of writing with vitriol. I have burned out my eyes at that pretty trade,

yes, burned them to the socket — to the *bobèches!*" he added, showing me his calcined eyelids, in which not the vestige of a lash remained.

I was so moved that I could not speak to him. My silence made him uneasy.

"Are you at work?"

"No, Bixiou, I am at breakfast. Will you have some?"

He did not answer, but by the quivering of his nostrils I saw his desire to accept. I took him by the hand and seated him beside me.

While they served him, the poor devil breathed in, as it were, the food with a laugh.

"It smells good, all that. I shall feast well; it is so long since I gave up breakfasting. A two-sous loaf every morning while I haunt the ministries,— for you know I haunt the ministries now-a-days; that's my only profession. I am trying to hook a tobacco license. You are shocked, but what am I to do? They must have food at home. I can't design any longer; I can't write. Dictate? But what? I have nothing in my head now; I can't invent. My business was to see the grimaces of Paris and show them up, and I can't do that any longer. So I bethought me of a tobacco license — not on the boulevards, you understand. I have no claim to that favour, not being the mother of a danseuse, nor the widow of an officer. No, simply some little provincial tobacco office, far away, in a corner of the Vosges. There I shall set up a big porcelain pipe and call myself Hans

or Zébédé, as in Erckmann-Chatrian, and I shall console myself for not writing any longer by making cornucopias for snuff out of the works of my contemporaries.

"That is all I ask for. Not much, is it? Well, it is the devil and all to get it. And yet I ought not to be without influence. Think how I used to be in the thick of everything! I dined with the marshal, and the prince, and the ministers; all those people wanted me because I amused them, or else because they were afraid of me. Now, I can't make any one afraid. Oh, my eyes! my poor eyes! No one invites me now. It is too dismal to have a blind head at table. Pass me the bread, if you please. Ah! those bandits; they are making me pay dear for that wretched tobacco license. For six months I have lobbied the ministries with my petition. I get there every morning when the servants are lighting the fires and exercising their Excellencies' horses in the courtyards, and I don't leave till night, when the lamps are brought in and the kitchens begin to smell good. My whole life is spent on the wooden chests of antechambers. The ushers know me well, I can tell you! At the Interior they call me 'That kind monsieur!' because, to get their good word, I make puns or sketch them some of the big-wigs on a corner of their tablets, which makes them laugh. That's what I've come to after twenty years of rollicking successes! that's the end of an artist's life. And to think that there are forty thousand young rascals in France whose very mouths water to take up that

profession! To think that every day in the provinces a locomotive gets up steam to bring batches of imbeciles hungry for literature and printed rubbish to Paris! Ah! deluded provinces, if Bixiou's miserable fate could only teach you a lesson!"

So saying, he dropped his nose into his plate and began to eat with avidity, without another word. It was piteous to see him. Every second he lost his bread, his fork, and felt about for his glass. Poor man! he had not yet got the habit of blindness.

After a while, he resumed: —

"Do you know what is most horrible of all to me? It is that I can no longer read the papers. You have to belong to the newspaper business to understand that. Sometimes, in the evening when I go home I buy one, only to smell that odour of damp paper and fresh news. It is so good! but there's no one to read it to me. My wife might, but she won't; she pretends that in the 'diverse' facts' there is so much that is improper. Ha! those former mistresses! once married, there are none more prudish than they. Ever since I made her Madame Bixiou she thinks herself bound to be a bigot — and to such a point! Did n't she want to have me wash my eyes with water from the Salette? and then, holy bread, and holy water, and collections, and Foundlings and Chinese orphans and I don't know what all. We are in good works up to our chin. *I* think it would be a good work to read me my newspaper, but no, she won't. If

my daughter were at home she would read it to me, but after I became blind I sent her to Notre-Dame-des-Arts, to have one less mouth to feed. She's another who gives me comfort! not nine years in the world, and she has had every known disease! And sad! and ugly! uglier than I, if that's possible — a fright! Well, I never could make anything but caricatures, and she is one of them — Ah ça! I'm a fine fellow to be telling you my family histories. What are they to you? Come, give me a little more of that brandy. I must brace myself up; I am going from here to the ministry of Public Instruction, and the ushers there are not so easy as some to amuse — they are all retired professors."

I poured him out his brandy. He began to drink it with little sips and a gentler air. Presently I don't know what fancy took him, but he rose, glass in hand, turned on all sides that head of a blind adder, with the cajoling smile of a man about to speak, and said, in a strident voice, as if haranguing a banquet of two hundred guests: —

"To Art! To Letters! To the Press!"

And thereupon he launched into a ten minutes' speech, the craziest, most marvellous improvisation which ever issued from that satirical brain.

Imagine a review of events at the end of a year, entitled, "The Bohemia of Letters in 18–"— our so called literary meetings, our disquisitions, our quarrels, all the absurdities of an eccentric society, a sewer of ink, hell without grandeur, where the denizens throttle, and gut, and rob one

another, and talk interest and sous (far more than they do among the bourgeois), which does not hinder many from dying of hunger—in short, an epitome of all our meanness, all our paltriness; old Baron T. . . of the Tombola going about saying "gna, gna, gna" in the Tuileries gardens with his wooden bowl and his bottle-blue coat; together with the deaths of the year, the burials *pro tem.*, the funeral orations, always the same "dear and regretted" over a poor devil whose grave no one will pay for; and the suicides, and those who have gone mad—imagine all that related, detailed, gesticulated, by a humourist of genius, and you will have an idea of Bixiou's improvisation.

His speech ended and the brandy drunk, he asked me what time it was and went away without bidding me good-bye. I don't know what the ushers of M. Duruy thought of his visit that morning, but I know that never in all my life did I feel more sad or so ill at ease for the work of the day as I did that morning after the departure of my terrible visitor. My inkstand sickened me, my pen was a horror to me. I wanted to rush away, afar, to see trees, to smell something good. What hatred, great God! what gall! what a need to slaver all things! to soil all things! Ah! the miserable man!

I paced up and down my room in a fury, fancying I still heard the sneer of disgust with which he had spoken of his daughter.

Suddenly, near the chair where the blind man

had been sitting, I felt something touch my foot. Stooping I saw his portfolio, a big, shiny wallet with broken edges, which never left him, and which he called in jest his "venom pocket." That pocket was as renowned among us as the famous boxes of M. de Girardin. It was said there were terrible things within it. The opportunity now offered itself to ascertain if this were so. In falling, the old portfolio, stuffed too full, had burst, and the papers lay scattered on the carpet. I was forced to pick them up, one by one; and so doing I saw: —

A number of letters, written on flowered paper, all beginning: "My dear papa," and signed *Céline Bixiou of the Children of Marie.*

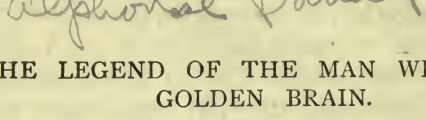
Old prescriptions for children's ailments; croup, convulsions, scarlatina, measles; the poor little thing had not been spared a single one.

Finally, from a large sealed envelope, a few strands of yellow curly hair were escaping, and on the paper was written, in big, straggling writing, the writing of a blind man: —

"Céline's hair, cut off May 13th; the day she entered over there."

That is what there was in Bixiou's portfolio.

Ah, Parisians, you are all alike. Disgust, sarcasm, infernal laughter, ferocious jeers, and then— *Céline's hair, cut off May 13th.*



THE LEGEND OF THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN BRAIN.

TO THE LADY WHO ASKS FOR GAY STORIES.

ON reading your letter, madame, I felt something like remorse. I blamed myself for the half-mourning colour of my tales, and I resolved to offer you to-day something joyous, even wildly joyous.

Why should I be sad, after all? I am living a thousand leagues from Parisian fogs, on a luminous hill, in a land of tambourines and muscat wine. Around me is nought but sun and music; I have orchestras of finches, choral societies of tom-tits; in the morning, curlews are saying: Coureli! coureli! at midday come the cicadas; and then the shepherds playing their fifes, and the pretty young brunettes laughing among the vines. In truth, this place is ill-chosen to rub-in black. I ought rather to send to a lady rose-coloured poems and tales of gallantry.

But, no! I am still too near Paris. Every day that city sends me, even among my pines, spatterings of her sadness. At the moment when I write these lines, the news reaches me of poor Charles Barbara's miserable death, and my mill is a place of mourning. Adieu, curlews and cicadas! I have

no heart now for gayety. This is why, madame, instead of the lively, jesting story that I meant to write for you, you must accept to-day one more melancholy legend.

There was once a man with a golden brain; yes, madame, a brain all golden. When he came into the world the doctors thought that the babe could not live, so heavy was his head and his cranium so developed. He did live, however, and he grew in the sun like a beautiful olive-tree. But his big head dragged him about, and it was pitiable to see how he knocked against the furniture as he went along. He often fell. Once he rolled from the top of a portico and struck his forehead on the marble steps, and his skull rang like an ingot of metal. They thought him dead; but, on picking him up, only a slight wound was found, out of which two or three tiny drops of gold oozed into his hair. This was how his parents first knew that his brain was gold.

The thing was kept secret. The poor little fellow himself did not know it. Now and then he would ask why they no longer let him run out to play with the children in the street.

"They would steal you, my dear treasure," replied his mother.

That gave the little one a great fear of being stolen. He played alone, and said no more; staggering heavily from one room to another.

When he was eighteen years of age his parents first revealed to him the abnormal gift he had

received from fate; and as they had brought him up and fed him until that day, they asked him, in return, for a little of his gold. The lad did not hesitate. Instantly — how, or by what means, the legend does not say — he tore from his brain a morsel of massive gold, a piece as big as a nut, and proudly flung it on his mother's lap. Then, quite dazzled by the thought of the riches he carried in his brain, mad with desires, drunk with his power, he quitted his father's house and went out into the world, squandering his treasure.

At this pace he led his life, in royal fashion, sowing gold without counting it, one would have thought that his brain was inexhaustible. It did exhaust itself, however, and by degrees his eyes grew dim, his cheeks hollow. At last, one morning after a wild debauch, the unfortunate fellow, left alone amid the fragments of the feast and the lamps that were paling, was horrified at the enormous breach he had made in his ingots. It was time to stop.

Henceforth, a new existence. The man with the golden brain went away, to live apart, by the work of his hands; suspicious and timid as a miser, fleeing from temptation, striving to forget, himself, the fatal riches which he desired never to touch again. Unfortunately, a friend followed him into his solitude; and that friend knew his secret.

One night the poor man was awakened by a pain in his head, a dreadful pain; he sprang up terri-

ied, and saw, in a moon ray, his friend hastily de-
parting and hiding something beneath his cloak.

A piece of his brain which was stolen from him!

Some time later, the man with the golden brain
ell in love. This time all was over with him.
He loved with the best of his soul a fair-haired
ittle woman, who loved him in return, but never-
heless preferred bow-knots and feathers and pretty
ronze tassels to her boots.

Between the fingers of this dainty creature, half
ird, half doll, the gold slipped gayly away. She
had all the caprices; he never could say her
nay; for fear of troubling her, he never told her
o the last about the melancholy source of his
fortune.

"We must be very rich," she would say.

And the poor fellow answered:—

"Oh, yes! very rich indeed!"

And so saying he smiled with love at the little
fairy bird that was eating his brain out innocently.
Sometimes, however, fears took possession of him;
he longed to become a miser; but then the little
woman would come to him, skipping, and say:

"My husband, you are so rich, buy me some-
thing that is very costly."

And he bought her something that was very
costly.

This lasted two years; then, one morning, the
little woman died, no one knew why, like a bird.
The gold was almost at an end, and with what re-
mained of it the widower gave his dear lost love a
fine interment. Bells all ringing, mourning coaches

draped with black, horses caparisoned, silver tears upon the velvet, and great black plumes upon their heads. Nothing seemed to him too magnificent. What was his gold to him now? He gave it to the church, to the bearers, to those who sold the *immortelles;* he gave it to every one, without a question. So, on leaving the cemetery, almost nothing remained to him of that marvellous brain, except a few atoms in the corners of the cranium.

Then he was seen to go away through the streets, with a wild look, his hands held out before him, stumbling along like a drunken man. At night, when the arcades were brilliant, he stopped before a large show-window in which a mass of stuffs and adornments glittered under the gaslight, and fixing his eyes on two pairs of blue satin slippers lined with swan's-down, "I wonder which she would like best," he said to himself, smiling. Then, forgetting already that the little wife was dead, he entered to buy them.

At the farther end of the shop the owner heard a loud cry; rushing forward she recoiled with fear on seeing a tall man leaning on the counter and gazing at her stupefied. In one hand he was holding a pair of blue slippers lined with swan's-down; the other he held out to her, all cut and bleeding, with fragments of gold at the tips of the nails.

That, madame, is the legend of the man with the golden brain.

In spite of its fantastic air, this legend is true from beginning to end. There are in this world

poor fellows who are compelled to live by their brains, and to pay in the fine gold of their marrow and substance for the smallest things of life. It is their daily martyrdom; and when they are weary of suffering —

THE POET MISTRAL.

LAST Sunday, on rising, I fancied I had waked in the rue du Faubourg-Montmartre. It rained, the sky was gray, the mill melancholy. I was afraid to spend that cold, rainy day at home, and suddenly a desire came to me to go and warm myself up beside Frédéric Mistral, that great poet, who lives three leagues away from my pines in his little village of Maillane.

No sooner thought than gone; a myrtle-wood stick, my Montaigne, a wrap, and I am off!

No one in the fields. Our noble Catholic Provence leaves the earth to rest on Sundays. The farmhouses are closed, the dogs are alone in the yards. Now and then I meet the waggon of a carrier with its streaming hood, or an old woman wrapped in her mantle, colour of dead leaves, or mules in their gala trappings, saddle-cloths of blue and white matweed, scarlet pompons and silver bells, drawing at a trot a *carriole* of the farm hands going to mass; and away over there, through the fog, I see a boat on the pond and a fisherman standing to cast his net.

No possibility of reading on the way. The rain is falling in torrents and the tramontana is dashing it in bucketfuls on my face. I do the way at a

rush; and after a walk of three hours I see before me the little cypress wood in the middle of which Maillane shelters itself in dread of the wind.

Not a cat in the village streets; everybody is at high-mass. As I pass before the church the trombones are snorting and I see the lighted candles through the panes of coloured glass.

The poet's house is at the extreme end of the village, the last house to the left on the road to Saint-Remy, — a tiny house of one storey with a garden in front. I enter softly. No one! The door of the salon is closed, but I hear behind it some one who is walking about and talking. The voice and step are known to me. I stop a moment in the little whitewashed passage, my hand on the button of the door, quite agitated. My heart is beating. He is there. At work. Must I wait till the strophe is composed? I' faith, no. I will enter.

Ah! Parisians, when the poet of Maillane went to you to show Paris to his Mireille, and you saw him in your salons, that Chactas in a dress coat, a stiff collar, and the tall hat which hampered him, as did his fame, you thought that was Mistral. No, it was not he. There is but one Mistral in the world, he whom I surprised last Sunday in his village with a felt hat on one ear, a jacket, no waistcoat, a red catalan waistband round his loins, his eye blazing, the fire of inspiration on his cheek-bones, superb, with a kind smile, graceful as a Greek shepherd, and walking up and down, his hands in his pockets, making poetry.

"What? is it you?" cried Mistral, springing to embrace me. "What a good idea of yours to come! This is the fête day of Maillane. We have a band from Avignon, bulls, a procession, the *farandole;* it will all be magnificent. My mother will soon be home from mass; we shall have breakfast, and then, *zou!* we 'll go and see the pretty girls dance."

While he spoke, I looked with emotion at the little salon hung in light colours, which I had not seen for a long time, but where I had passed so many glorious hours. Nothing was changed. Still the same sofa with yellow squares, the two arm-chairs of straw, the Venus without arms, the Venus of Arles on the mantel, the portrait of the poet by Hébert, his photograph by Étienne Carjat and, in a corner, near the window, the desk (a shabby little registration-clerk's desk) piled with old volumes and dictionaries. At the centre of the desk I saw a large open manuscript. This was *Calendal,* — Mistral's new poem, which will appear on Christmas-day of the present year. This poem, Mistral has been working at for seven years, and it is now six months since he wrote the last line of it; but he dares not part from it yet. You understand, there is always a verse to polish, a rhyme more sonorous to find. Though Mistral composes wholly in the Provençal language, he writes and rewrites his lines as if all the world could read them in their own tongue and do justice to his labour as a good workman. Oh! the noble poet! it is surely of Mistral that Montaigne might have said: —

"Do you remember him of whom it was asked why he took such trouble about an art which could reach the knowledge of so few persons? 'The few are enough for me,' he answered. 'One is enough. None is enough.'"

I took the manuscript of *Calendal* in my hand, and I turned its leaves with emotion. Suddenly a burst of fifes and tambourines sounded in the street beneath the windows, and behold, my Mistral rushing to his closet, bringing out glasses and bottles, dragging the table to the middle of the salon, and opening the door to the musicians, saying to me as he did so: —

"Don't laugh. They have come to serenade me. I am a municipal counsellor."

The little room became crowded with people. They laid their tambourines on the chairs and put their old banner in a corner. Boiled wine circulated. Then, when several bottles had been emptied to the health of M. Frédéric and they had gravely conversed together about the festival — would the *farandole* be as fine as last year? would the bulls behave properly? — the musicians retired to go and greet the other members of the Council with a like serenade. At this moment Mistral's mother appeared.

In a turn of the hand the table is laid with a fine white cloth and two places. I know the customs of the house. I know that when Mistral has company his mother never sits at table. The poor old woman speaks only Provençal, and would feel

very ill at her ease with Frenchmen. Besides, she is wanted in the kitchen.

Dieu! the good meal I made that morning: a bit of roast kid, some mountain cheese, grape jelly, figs, and muscat grapes. The whole washed down with that good *Château-neuf des Papes* that has so fine a rosy colour in the glasses.

At dessert, I fetched the poem and laid it on the table before Mistral.

"But we said we would go out," said the poet, smiling.

"No, no! *Calendal! Calendal!*"

Mistral resigned himself, and in his soft and musical voice, beating time to his lines with his hand, he sang the first quatrain: "Of a girl mad with love, — I have told the sad adventure, — and I now will sing, if God so wills, a child of Cassis — a poor little sardine fisher."

Without, the bells were ringing for vespers, the fire-crackers burst in the square, the fifes and the tambourines marched up and down, and the bulls of the Camargue, held ready for the race, bellowed loudly.

I, my elbows on the cloth, and with tears in my eyes, I listened to the tale of the little Provençal fisher-lad.

Calendal was only a fisher-lad; love made him a hero. To win the heart of his darling, the lovely Estérella, he undertook marvellous things, beside which the labours of Hercules, those twelve labours, were nothing.

Once, taking a notion to be rich, he invented a formidable fishing-net, and with it he brought into port all the fish of the sea.

Again, 't was the terrible bandit of the gorges of Ollioules, Count Sévéran, whom he drove to his eyrie on the heights, with his cut-throats and concubines.

What a bold little chap, this Calendal! One day at Sainte-Baume, he met two parties of knights, come to settle their quarrel by orthodox blows at the tomb of Maître Jacques, — a Provençal who, an it please you, built the frame of the temple of Solomon. Calendal, fearing nothing, rushed headlong in the midst of the killing, appeasing the knights with his tongue.

Other superhuman undertakings! Among the rocks of Lure, was a forest of cedars, inaccessible, where never a woodsman dared to go. Calendal went. There he lived all alone for thirty days. During those thirty days the sound of his axe was heard, driven deep in the trees. The forest moaned; one after another its old, giant trees fell and were rolled to the foot of the precipice, so that when Calendal came down not a cedar remained on the mountain.

At last, in reward for such prowess, the sardine fisher obtains the love of Estérella, and is named first consul by the dwellers in Cassis. That is the tale of Calendal; but Calendal matters but little. What there is above all in the poem is — Provence; Provence of the sea, Provence of the mountain; with its history, legends, manners, cus-

toms, landscapes — a whole people, naïve and free, who have found their great poet before he dies. And now, line out your railways, plant those telegraph poles, drive the Provençal tongue from the schools! Provence will live eternally in *Mireille* and in *Calendal.*

"Enough of poesy!" cried Mistral, closing his manuscript. "Let us go and see the fête."

We started; the whole village was in the streets; a great north wind had swept the sky, which was gleaming, joyous, on the dark red roofs that were damp with rain. We got there in time to see the return of the procession. For an hour it was one interminable defiling of cowled penitents, white penitents, blue penitents, gray penitents; sisterhoods of veiled women, rose-coloured banners with golden flowers, great gilded wooden saints, much tarnished, carried on the shoulders of men, female saints in earthenware, coloured like idols, with bouquets in their hands, copes, monstrances, a green velvet dais, a crucifix swathed in white silk undulating to the breeze in the light of sun and torches, amid psalms, litanies, and bells madly ringing.

The procession over, the saints put back in their chapel, we went to see the bulls, then the games on the barn-floors, the wrestling, the three jumps, the strangle-cat, the bottle-game, and the whole of the pretty fun of a Provence fête. Night was coming on when we returned to Maillane. On the square, before the little café where Mistral goes in the evening to play a game with his friend Zidore, a great

bonfire was lighted. The *farandole* was organized. Open-work paper lanterns were lighted in the dark corners: youth took the field; and soon, at the call of the tambourines, began, around the flame, a whirling, noisy dance, which would last all night.

After supper, too weary to go about any longer, Mistral and I went up to his chamber, a modest peasant's-chamber, with two large beds. The walls are not papered, the rafters of the ceiling are visible. Four years ago, when the Academy gave to the author of *Mireille* that prize of three thousand francs, Madame Mistral had an idea.

"Suppose we paper and ceil your room?"

"No! no!" cried Mistral, "that's the money of poets, don't touch it."

So the room was left bare; but so long as the money of poets lasted those who rapped at Mistral's door found his purse open.

I had brought up the sheets of *Calendal*, for I wanted to make him read me a passage before I went to sleep. Mistral chose the pottery incident; and here it is in a few words: —

The scene is a great repast, I know not where. They bring upon the table a magnificent service of the glazed pottery of Moustiers. In the centre of each plate, designed in blue on the enamel, is a Provençal subject; a whole history of the region is there. It is wonderful to see with what love the beautiful service is described, a verse to every plate, and each a little poem of naïve and learned workmanship, finished as an idyll of Theocritus.

While Mistral was repeating his poems in that beautiful Provençal language, more than three-fourths Latin, the language that queens once spoke and none but shepherds can now understand, I admired within me that man; and, reflecting on the condition of ruin in which he found his mother-tongue and what he had made of it, I fancied myself in one of those old palaces of the princes of Baux, such as we still see in the Alpilles, roofless, without rails to the porticos, without sashes to the windows, the trefoil of the arches broken, the blazon on the doorways eaten by mosses, hens marauding in the courts of honour, porkers wallowing beneath the dainty columns of the galleries, donkeys browsing in the chapel where the grass is green, and pigeons drinking from the holy-water basins now filled by rain, while among these dilapidated remains of the past, two or three families have built themselves huts in the flanks of the old palace. Then, some fine day, the son of a peasant is seized with admiration for these grand ruins; he is indignant at seeing them so profaned: quick, quick, he drives out the cattle and the poultry from the court of honour and — the fairies lending him a hand — he reconstructs the great staircase, replaces the panels of the walls, the sashes of the windows, builds up the towers, regilds the throne and its hall, and raises once more upon its base the vast old palace of other days, where popes and empresses lodged and lived.

That restored palace is the Provençal language.

That son of a peasant is Mistral.

ORANGES.

In Paris oranges have the melancholy air of fruit that is dropped from the tree and picked up from the ground. At the time when they arrive, in the cold and rainy midwinter, their high-coloured skins, their excessive perfume in our land of tranquil tastes, give them an exotic aspect, a little bohemian. Of a misty night they perambulate the side-walks, heaped in their little handcarts, by the dull light of a red paper lantern. A monotonous and feeble cry escorts them, lost in the roll of carriages and the rattle of omnibuses: "Two sous a Valentia!"

To three-fourths of all Parisians, this fruit gathered afar, monotonous in its roundness, in which the tree has left nothing but a small green twig, seems to belong to confectionery, to sweetmeats. The tissue paper which wraps it, the fêtes it accompanies, contribute to this impression. Toward the last of the year especially, thousands of oranges disseminated through the streets, the peels that lie about in the mud of the gutters, make one think of some gigantic Christmas tree shaking over Paris its branches laden with imitation fruit. Not a corner where we do not find them. In the large

show windows selected and arranged; at the door of prisons and hospitals, among packages of biscuit and piles of apples; before the entrances to the Sunday balls and theatres. Their exquisite perfume mingles with the odour of gas, the scraping of fiddles, the dust of the benches in paradise. We have come to forget that oranges grow on orange-trees, for while the fruit arrives from the South in boxes, the trimmed, transformed, disguised tree of the greenhouse where it has passed the winter, makes but a short apparition in our gardens.

To know oranges well, you must see them at home, in the Balearic Isles, in Sardinia, Corsica, Algeria, in the blue, gilded air and the warm atmosphere of the Mediterranean. I remember a little grove of orange-trees at the gates of Blidah; ah! it is there that they are beautiful. Amid the dark, lustrous, varnished foliage the fruits have the splendour of coloured glass; they gild the environing air with the dazzling halo that surrounds a glowing flower. Here and there little clearings through the branches showed the ramparts of the town, the minaret of a mosque, the dome of a saint's tomb, and, towering above them all, the enormous mass of Atlas, green at its base, and crowned with snow like a fleece or a white fur softly fallen.

One night while I was there, I do not know by what phenomenon, unknown for thirty years, that upper zone of wintry hoar-frost shook itself down upon the sleeping town, and Blidah awoke transformed, powdered to white. In that Algerine air,

so light, so pure, the snow was like a dust of mother-of-pearl. It had all the reflections of a white peacock's plume. Most beautiful of all was the orange grove. The solid leaves held the snow intact, like sherbet on a lacquered dish; and the fruit, all powdered with the hoar-frost, had a softened splendour, a discreet glow, like gold veiled lightly in gauze. The scene had vaguely the effect of a church festival, of red cassocks under robes of lace, the golden altars swathed in guipure.

But my best memory of oranges comes to me from Barbicaglia, a great garden near Ajaccio, where I went for my siesta in the heat of the day. Here the orange-trees, taller and more spreading than those of Blidah, come down to the main road, from which the garden is separated by only a ditch and an evergreen hedge. Immediately beyond is the sea, the vast blue sea. . . Oh! what good hours did I pass in that garden! Above my head the orange-trees, in bloom and in fruit, exhaled the perfume of their essence. From time to time a ripe orange, as though weighed down by the heat, fell beside me with a flat, echoless sound on the fecund earth. I had only to put out my hand. The fruit was superb, of a crimson red within. It seemed to me exquisite—and then, the horizon was so beautiful! Between the leaves the sea put azure spaces, dazzling as pieces of broken glass shimmering in the quiver of the air. And with all that, the motion of the waves stirring the atmosphere at a great distance with a cadenced murmur which rocked you like an unseen boat,

and the warmth, and the odour of the oranges! Ah! how good it was to sleep in the garden of Barbicaglia!

Sometimes, however, at the pleasantest moment of the siesta, the roll of drums would rouse me with a start. It was those wretched little drummers, practising below on the main-road. Through gaps in the hedge I could see the brass of their instruments and their great white aprons on their red trousers. To shelter themselves a little from the blinding light which the dust of the road reflected pitilessly, the poor young devils would plant themselves at the foot of the garden in the scanty shadow of the hedge. And they drummed! and they were so hot! Then, wrenching myself forcibly from my hypnotism, I amused myself by flinging them some of that beautiful golden-red fruit which hung close to my hand. The drummer first aimed at stopped. There was a moment's hesitation, a look went round to see whence came that splendid orange rolling before him into the ditch; then he picked it up very fast and bit into it with his teeth without peeling off the skin.

I remember also that close to Barbicaglia and separated from it by a low wall, was a queer little garden that I could look into from the height where I lay. 'Twas a small corner of earth laid out in bourgeois fashion. Its paths, yellow with sand and bordered with very green box, and the two cypresses at its entrance gave it the appearance of a Marseillaise surburban villa garden. Not an atom of shade. At the farther end was a building

of white stone with cellar windows on a line with the ground. At first, I thought it a country-house; then looking closer, a cross that surmounted it, an inscription cut into the stone that I could see from a distance without distinguishing the letters, made me recognize it as the tomb of a Corsican family. All around Ajaccio, there are many of these mortuary chapels, built in gardens of their own. The family comes on Sunday to pay a visit to its dead. Thus treated, death is less lugubrious than amid the confusion of cemeteries. The feet of friends alone break the silence.

From my station above, I could see a good old man coming and going tranquilly along the paths. Every day he trimmed the trees, he spaded, watered, and picked off the faded flowers with infinite care; then, when the sun was setting, he always entered the little chapel where the dead of his family were sleeping; and he put away his spades and rakes and watering-pots, with the tranquillity, the serenity of a cemetery gardener. And yet, without himself being aware of it, the good man worked with a certain gravity; he subdued all noises and closed the door of the vault discreetly, as if fearing to awaken an inmate. In the great glowing silence the neatness of the little garden was never troubled by even a bird, and its neighbourhood had nothing sad about it. Only, the sea seemed more immense, the heavens higher, and the endless siesta shed around the place, amid a troubled nature oppressive in its strength of life, the feeling of eternal repose.

THE TWO INNS.

IT happened when returning from Nîmes, one July afternoon. The heat was exhausting. As far as the eye could reach the white road, smoking, powdered along between olive-gardens and scrub-oaks, beneath a silvery sun-glare that filled the whole sky. Not a patch of shade, not a breath of wind. Nothing but the vibration of that hot air, and the strident noise of the grasshoppers, a crazy, deafening music to quick time, which seemed like the actual sonority of that vast luminous pulsation. I had walked, as it were in the desert, for two whole hours when suddenly, before me, a group of white houses defined themselves in the dust from the road. This was what was called the "relay of Saint Vincent;" five or six buildings, long barns with red roofs, a drinking trough without water, in a clump of spindling fig-trees; and, quite at the farther end, two large inns facing each other from opposite sides of the road.

The neighbouring of these two inns had something peculiar about it. On one side a great new building, full of life and animation; all doors open, the diligence stopping before it, the smoking horses there unharnessed, the travellers getting out to drink in haste on the road in the scanty

shadow of the walls, the courtyard crowded with mules and carts and the carters lying under the sheds for coolness. Within, shouts, oaths, fists pounding on the tables, the rattling of glasses and billiard-balls, lemonade bottles popping; and above this din a joyous, ringing voice, singing in a tone that shook the windows:—

"My pretty Margoton
Early has risen,
Taken her silver bowl,
Gone to the cistern."

The inn directly opposite, on the contrary, was silent and as if abandoned. Grass was under the gateway, shutters were broken; above the door a rusty twig of box hung down like a broken feather, the step of the door was lower than the stones of the street. It was all so poor, so pitiable, that it was really a charity to stop there and drink a drop.

On entering I found a long hall, silent and gloomy, which the dazzling light of three large windows seemed to render gloomier and more silent still. A few lame tables on which were glasses dim with dust, a ragged billiard-table holding out its pockets like almsbags, a yellow divan, an old counter, were slumbering there in heavy, unwholesome heat. And flies! flies! never did I see so many; on the ceilings, sticking to the windows, to the glasses, in clusters. When I opened the door there was a buzz, and a humming of wings as if I had entered a bee-hive.

At the farther end of the hall, in the embrasure

of a window stood a woman, her face against the panes, quite absorbed in looking out into the street. I called her twice: —

"Hey! hostess!"

She turned round slowly, and showed me a poor peasant face, wrinkled, fissured, the colour of the soil, framed in long lappets of rusty lace, such as the old women wear in these parts. And yet she was not an old woman; but tears had withered her.

"What do you want?" she asked, wiping her eyes.

"To sit down a minute, and drink something."

She looked at me much surprised, without moving from her place, as if she did not understand me.

"Is not this an inn?"

The woman sighed.

"Yes — it is an inn, if you choose. But why don't you go, like others, over the way? It is gayer there."

"It is too gay for me. I prefer to stay here."

And without waiting for any reply I seated myself at a table.

When she was sure that I meant what I said, the landlady bustled about with a very busy air, opening drawers, moving bottles, dusting glasses, disturbing the flies. One felt that the arrival of a traveller to serve was quite an event. Now and then the poor creature paused and put her hand to her head as if she despaired of accomplishing anything.

Then she went into a room at the end of the hall, and I heard her jingling keys, trying them in

the locks, opening the bread-box, blowing, dusting, washing plates. From time to time, a heavy sigh or a stifled sob.

After a quarter of an hour of this performance I had before me a dish of *passerilles* (dried grapes) an old loaf of Beaucaire bread as hard as sandstone, and a bottle of sour wine.

"You are served," said the strange creature; and she turned away hastily to resume her station at the window.

While I drank I tried to make her talk.

"You don't have many people here, do you, my poor woman?"

"Oh, no, monsieur, never any one. When we were alone in the business, things were very different. Then we had the relays, and the hunters to dine in the duck-season, and carriages all the year round. But since our neighbours came and settled here we have lost everything. People prefer to go opposite. They think it is too gloomy here. The fact is, this house is not very agreeable. I am not handsome, I have fever and ague, and my two little ones are dead. Over there, on the contrary, they are laughing all the time. It is an Arlesian woman who keeps that inn, a handsome woman with laces and three rows of gold chain round her neck. The conductor is her lover, and he takes the diligence there. Besides which, there's a lot of cajolers as chamber-maids. And that brings her such custom! She gets all the young men of Bezouces, Redessan, and Jon-

quières. The bagmen come out of their way to stop there. As for me, I am left all day alone, doing nothing."

She said it with an absent, indifferent air, her forehead still leaning against the panes. Evidently, there was something in that opposite inn which absorbed her mind.

All of a sudden, on the other side of the way, a great commotion took place. The diligence was preparing to start. I heard the cracks of the whip, the postilion's horn, and the maids about the doorway crying out: "Adiousas! Adiousas!" and louder than all, that strong voice I had heard before, singing more vigorously than ever: —

"Taken her silver bowl,
Gone to the cistern,
Sees not approaching her
Three cavaliers."

At the sound of that voice the landlady's whole body quivered, and, turning to me, she said in a low voice: —

"Do you hear him? That is my husband. Does n't he sing well?"

I looked at her, amazed.

"Your husband! Does *he* go over there, too?"

Then she, with a heart-broken air, but very gently: —

"It can't be helped, monsieur. Men are like that; they hate to see tears; and I am always crying since I lost my little ones. Besides, this great barrack where no one comes is so gloomy. And when he is quite tired of it my poor José goes over

there to drink, and as he has a fine voice the Arlesian woman makes him sing. Hush! there he is again."

And, trembling, her hands outstretched, with big tears rolling down her cheeks, making her look uglier than ever, she stood there as if in ecstasy to hear her José singing for the Arlesian woman: —

"My pretty Margoton
Early has risen."

AT MILIANAH.

NOTES OF TRAVEL.

THIS time I take you to spend a day in a pretty little town of Algeria, two or three hundred leagues from my mill. That will make a little change from tambourines and grasshoppers.

It is going to rain, the sky is gray, the crests of Mont Zaccar are swathed in fog. A melancholy Sunday. In my little hotel-chamber with its window looking to the Arab ramparts, I try to amuse myself by lighting cigarettes. The library of the hotel has been placed at my disposal. Between a full and detailed history of the registration and a novel of Paul de Kock I discover a dilapidated volume of Montaigne. I open the book at random and re-read the admirable letter on the death of the Boétie. I am now more dreamy and sombre than ever. A few drops of rain are beginning to fall. Every drop, as it falls on the window sill, makes a great star in the dust that has settled there since the rains of last year. The book slips from my fingers, and I spend long minutes in gazing at that melancholy splash.

Two o'clock rings from the tower of the town — the former tomb of a saint, the frail white walls of which I can see from here. Poor devil of a saint!

how little he thought thirty years ago, that he would carry on his breast the huge face of a municipal clock, and that every Sunday at two o'clock he would give to the churches of Milianah the signal to ring for vespers. Ding dong! there go the bells! and long will they ring. Decidedly, this room is melancholy. Those big matutinal spiders called philosophical thoughts are spinning their webs in every corner. I shall go out.

I reach the great square. The band of the 3rd infantry, which a little rain does not frighten, is gathering round its leader. At one of the windows of headquarters the general appears, surrounded by his young ladies; on the square the sub-prefect is walking about arm in arm with the justice of peace. Half a dozen little Arabs, nearly naked, are playing marbles in a corner with ferocious yells. Over there is an old Jew in rags seeking for the sunshine he left on that spot yesterday, and quite surprised not to find it. "One, two, three!" and the band starts off with an old mazurka by Talexy which the barrel organs were playing under my window a year ago. That mazurka annoyed me then; to-day it moves me to tears.

Oh! how lucky they are those musicians of the 3rd infantry. Their eyes fixed on their semi-quavers, tipsy with rhythm and racket, they are thinking of nothing but counting their time. Their soul, their whole soul is in that square of paper the size of my hand which trembles at the end of their instruments between two brass

pins. "One, two, three!" That's the whole of it for those worthy fellows; never do the national airs they play give them a thought of home-sickness. Alas! I, who am not of the band, am distressed by the band, and I depart.

Where shall I spend it, this dismal Sunday afternoon? . . Good! Sid' Omar's shop is open. I'll spend it with Sid' Omar.

Though he has a shop, Sid' Omar is not a shopkeeper. He is a prince of the blood, the son of a former Dey of Algiers who was strangled by the janissaries. On the death of his father, Sid' Omar took refuge in Milianah with his mother, whom he adored, and there he lived some years philosophically as a great seigneur, among his hounds and falcons, his horses and his women, in pretty, airy palaces full of orange-trees and fountains. Then came the French. Sid' Omar, at first our enemy and the ally of Abd-el-Kader, ended by quarrelling with the emir and making his submission to us. Abd-el-Kader, to avenge himself, entered Milianah, during Sid' Omar's absence, pillaged his palaces, cut down his orange-trees, carried off his horses and women, and caused his mother's throat to be crushed by the shutting down of the lid of a great coffer. The anger of Sid' Omar was terrible. Instantly he entered the French service, and we had no better or more ferocious soldier than he during all the time the war against the emir lasted. That war over, Sid' Omar returned to Milianah; but even to-day

if you mention the name of Abd-el-Kader in his presence, he turns pale, and his eyes blaze.

Sid' Omar is sixty years old. In spite of years and the smallpox, his face is still handsome; long lashes, the glance of a woman, a charming smile, the air of a prince. Ruined by the war, nothing is left of his former opulence but a farm on the Chélif plain, and a house at Milianah, where he lives in bourgeois fashion with his three sons, whom he is bringing up under his own eye. The native chieftains hold him in great veneration. When a discussion arises they willingly take him as umpire; and his decision is almost always regarded as law. He seldom goes out; you will find him every afternoon in a shop adjoining his house, which opens on the street. The furniture of this place is not splendid, — white-washed walls, a circular wooden bench, cushions, pipes, and two foot-warmers. That is where Sid' Omar gives audience and lays down the law. Solomon in a shop.

To-day, being Sunday, the company is numerous. A dozen sheiks are crouched in their burnous, round the room. Each has beside him a large pipe and a little cup of coffee in a delicate filigree holder. I enter; no one stirs. From his place Sid' Omar sends me his most charming smile and invites me with his hand to sit near him on a large cushion of yellow silk. Then, with his finger on his lips, he makes me a sign to listen.

This is why: The caïd of the Benizougzougs

having a dispute with a Milianah Jew about a bit of ground, both parties had agreed to carry the matter to Sid' Omar and submit to his decision. Appointment was made for the same day; the witnesses were summoned; when, all of a sudden, the Jew changed his mind, and came alone, without witnesses, to declare that he preferred to submit the matter to the French justice of peace, rather than Sid' Omar. That was how the affair stood at my entrance.

The Jew — old, with a dirty beard, maroon jacket, blue stockings, velvet cap — raised his nose to heaven, rolled supplicating eyes, kissed the slippers of Sid' Omar, bowed his head and knelt with clasped hands. I don't understand Arabic, but from this pantomime, during which the words "joustice of peace, joustice of peace" recurred incessantly, I could guess the whole of the shrewd meaning: —

"We do not doubt Sid' Omar; Sid' Omar is wise, Sid' Omar is just. But the joustice of peace will do better by us."

The audience, indignant, remained impassible, as Arabs are wont to be. Stretched out upon his cushion, eyes hazy, the amber-mouth-piece between his lips, Sid' Omar — god of irony — smiled as he listened. Suddenly, in the midst of his wiliest sentence, the Jew is interrupted by an energetic "Caramba!" which stops him short; and at the same instant a Spanish colonist, who was there as a witness for the card, left his place, and approaching Iscariot poured upon him a deluge of impreca-

tions in all tongues and all colours — among them a certain French vocable too gross, monsieur, to repeat here. The son of Sid' Omar, who understood French, blushed at hearing such a word in his father's presence and left the place. (Remember this trait of Arab education.)

The audience was still impassible, Sid' Omar still smiling. The Jew rose and backed towards the door, trembling with fear, but still warbling his eternal "joustice of peace, joustice of peace." He went out. The Spaniard furious, rushed after him and twice — vli! vlan! — struck him in the face. Iscariot fell on his knees, his arms crossed. The Spaniard, rather ashamed, returned to the shop. As soon as he had entered, the Jew picked himself up, and turned an artful eye on the variegated crowd that surrounded him; a crowd in which there were men of all skins — Maltese, Mahonese, negroes, Arabs, all united in hatred to a Jew and delighting in seeing him maltreated. Iscariot hesitated a moment; then, taking an Arab by the flap of his burnous, —

"You saw it, Achmed, you saw it; you were there. The Christian struck me. You must be witness — yes, yes, you shall be witness."

The Arab freed his burnous and pushed away the Jew. He knows nothing; he saw nothing; he was looking the other way.

"But you, Kadour, you saw it; you saw the Christian strike me," cries the luckless Iscariot to a big negro who was peeling a Barbary fig.

The negro spat in sign of contempt, and walked

away — he had seen nothing. Neither had a little Maltese fellow seen anything with his coal-black eyes glittering malignantly beneath his beretta; nor she, that Mahonese woman with the brick-coloured skin, who ran off laughing, carrying a basket of pomegranates on her head.

In vain did Iscariot shout, beg, beseech — not a witness, no one had seen anything. By great good luck two of his co-religionists happened to come by at this moment, skirting the walls with a hang-dog look. The Jew spied them.

"Quick, quick, brothers! quick to the joustice of peace! You saw him, you two; you saw him how he struck the old man."

Had they seen it? I should think so!

Great excitement in Sid' Omar's shop. The coffeeman refilled the cups and relit the pipes. They talked, they laughed with all their teeth. It is so amusing to see a Jew beaten! In the midst of the general clatter I slipped softly to the door; I wanted to wander about the Jewish quarter and see how Iscariot's co-religionists were taking the affront thus put upon their brother.

"Come and dine to-night, *moussieu*," called out the good Sid' Omar.

I accepted, thanked him, and went out.

In the Jewish quarter every one was afoot. The affair had already made a great noise. No one was inside the booths. Embroiderers, tailors, harness-makers — all Israel was in the streets. The men, wearing velvet caps and blue stockings.

gesticulated noisily in groups. The women, pale, puffy, stiff as wooden idols in their tight gowns with gilded stomachers, their faces framed in heavy black bandeaux, were going from group to group, caterwauling. Just as I arrived a great impulse was given to the crowd. They pressed together and hurried along. Accompanied by his witnesses, the Jew, the hero of the adventure, passed between two hedges of his co-religionists under a rain of exhortations: —

"Avenge yourself, brother! Avenge us! Avenge the Jewish people! Fear nothing; you have the law on your side."

A frightful dwarf, smelling of pitch and old leather, came up to me with a piteous air and said, sighing heavily: —

"You see how they treat us poor Jews. He is an old man! look at him. They have nearly killed him."

And, in truth, poor Iscariot did look more dead than alive. He passed in front of me — eyes dulled, face ghastly; not walking but dragging himself along. A good indemnity alone could cure him. Consequently, they did not take him to a doctor, but to a lawyer.

There are many lawyers in Algeria, almost as many as there are grasshoppers. The trade is a good one, they say. At any rate, it has this advantage, it can be taken up at any time, without examinations, without sureties, without probation. Just as in Paris we make ourselves men of letters,

in Algeria they make themselves lawyers. It is enough to know a little French, Spanish, Arabic, to have a code at your fingers' ends, and, above all, the temperament of the trade.

As for the functions of this agent, they are varied; by turns solicitor, barrister, court official, expert, interpreter, book-keeper, commissioner, public writer, he is the Maître Jacques of the colony. Only, Harpagon had but one Maître Jacques, and the colony has more than it wants. At Milianah alone they count by dozens. As a general thing, these gentlemen, to avoid the cost of an office, receive their clients at the café in the great square, and hold their consultations — do they consult at all? — between absinthe and *champoreau*.

It was towards the café in the great square that the worthy Iscariot was now proceeding, flanked by his two witnesses. We will not follow him.

In leaving the Jewish quarter I passed before the house of what is called the Arab Bureau. Outside, with its slate roof and the French flag floating above it, you would take it for the town-hall of some village. I know the interpreter, and I enter to smoke a cigar with him. One way or another I shall manage to kill it, this sunless Sunday!

The courtyard in front of the bureau is encumbered with Arabs in rags. Fifty, at least, are in attendance, crouching along the walls in their burnous. This Bedouin antechamber exhales —

though in the open air — a strong odour of human skins. Let us pass through quickly. In the bureau I find the interpreter involved with two big brawlers, entirely naked under long greasy coverlets, who are relating with savage gestures some story, I know not what, of a stolen chaplet. I seat myself on a mat in the corner, and look on. . . A pretty costume that of interpreters, and how jauntily the interpreter of Milianah wears it! Clothes and man, they look as if they had been invented for each other. The costume is sky-blue, with black froggings and gilt buttons that shine. The interpreter himself is fair, rosy, and curled; a charming blue hussar, full of humour and whimsicality; quite talkative — he speaks all languages — and rather sceptical, having known Renan at the Oriental College: he is a great lover of sport; as much at his ease in an Arab bivouac as he is in the salons of the sub-prefecture, mazurking better than any one and making kouss-kouss better still. A Parisian, — to say it all in one word, — and you need not be surprised that the women dote upon him. In the matter of dandyism, he has but one rival — the sergeant of the Arab Bureau. The latter, in his broadcloth tunic and his gaiters with mother-of-pearl buttons, is the despair and envy of the whole garrison. Detailed to the Arab Bureau he is relieved from fatigue duty, and shows himself about the streets in white gloves, hair freshly curled, with registers under his arm. He is admired, and feared. He is an authority.

Decidedly, this tale of the stolen chaplet threatens to be very long. Good-bye! I won't wait for the end of it.

As I depart I find the courtyard antechamber in commotion. The crowd is pressing round a tall Arab, pale and proud, draped in a black burnous. This man had a tussle in the Zaccar a week earlier with a panther. The panther is dead, but the man has an arm badly bitten. Night and morning he comes to have his wound dressed at the Arab Bureau, and every time he comes he is stopped in the courtyard and made to relate the whole adventure. He speaks slowly, in a beautiful deep voice. Now and then he opens his burnous and shows, fastened to his breast, the left arm bound with bloody bandages.

I was hardly in the street before a storm burst violently. Rain, thunder, lightning, sirocco. Quick! to shelter! I darted through a gate, hap-hazard, and fell into the midst of a nest of bohemians, crouching under the arcades of a Moorish court. This court is next to the mosque of Milianah; it is the habitual refuge of Mussulman vagrants, and is therefore called the "court of the paupers."

Great gaunt hounds, covered with vermin, came snuffing round me with a wicked air. Leaning against one of the pillars of the gallery, I endeavoured to put a good face on the matter, and, without speaking to any one, I watched the rain ricochetting on the coloured tiles of the courtyard. The beggars were on the ground in piles.

Near me a young woman, almost handsome, with bare neck and legs, and heavy iron bracelets on wrists and ankles, was singing a strange air on three sad, whining notes. As she sang, she nursed at her breast a little naked child of a bronze-red colour, while with her one free arm she pounded barley in a stone mortar. The rain, driven by the cruel wind, soaked at times the legs of the woman and the body of her nursling. She paid no heed to it, but continued to sing through the storm, crushing the barley and suckling the child.

The tempest slackened. Profiting by a break in the clouds, I hastened away from the Moorish court in the direction of Sid' Omar and his dinner. It was high time. Crossing the great square, I again met the old Jew. He was leaning on the lawyer's arm, his witnesses walked joyfully after him, and a band of villanous little Jew boys skipped along with the party. Their faces were radiant. The lawyer had taken charge of the affair, and was on his way to ask for an indemnity of two thousand francs.

At Sid' Omar's a sumptuous dinner. The dining-room opens on an elegant Moorish court, where two or three fountains are singing. Excellent Turkish repast, recommended to Baron Brisse. Among other dishes, I remember a chicken with almonds, kouss-kouss à la vanille, a turtle stuffed with meat — a little heavy perhaps, but very appetizing — and biscuits made of honey, called *bôuchées de cadi.* By way of wine, champagne only. In

spite of the Mussulman law, Sid' Omar drank a little of it, when the servants' backs were turned. After dinner we removed to our host's bedchamber, and there they brought us confectionery, pipes, and coffee. The furniture of this room is of the simplest: a divan, a few mats, at the farther end a very high large bed, on which red cushions embroidered in gold are scattered about. Hanging to the wall is an old Turkish picture representing the exploits of a certain admiral, Hamadi. It seems that in Turkey painters use but one colour to each picture; this picture is vowed to green. The sea, the sky, the ship, Admiral Hamadi himself, all are green — and what a green!

Arab customs require you to retire early. Coffee taken and the pipes smoked, I wished good-night to my host, and left him with his women.

Where shall I finish my evening? It is too early to go to bed; the bugles of the spahis have not yet sounded taps. Besides, the golden cushions of Sid' Omar dance fantastic *farandoles* about me, and would hinder me from sleeping. Lo! here I am before a theatre; suppose I enter for a moment?

The theatre of Milianah is an old forage storehouse, more or less disguised for stage purposes. Huge glass cups which they fill with oil between the acts serve as lustres. The pit stands; the occupants of the orchestra sit on benches. The galleries are very proud because they have straw chairs. All around the audience chamber is a long

dark passage, unfloored, where one might think one's self in the street. The play has already begun when I enter. To my great surprise, the actors are not bad; I speak of the men; they have spirit and animation, life. Nearly all are amateurs, soldiers of the third infantry; the regiment is proud of them, and comes nightly to applaud their performance.

As for the women, alas! they are ever and always that "eternal feminine" of the little provincial stage — pretentious, exaggerated, and false. Among them, however, there are two who interest me, two Milianah Jewesses, very young, who are making their first appearance in public. Their parents are in the hall and seem enchanted. They are convinced that their daughters will earn millions of douros in the business. The legend of Rachel, Israelite, millionaire, and actress, has spread among the Jews of the Orient. Nothing could be more comical, yet affecting, than those two little Jewesses on the stage. They kept themselves timidly in a corner of it, painted, powdered, low-necked, and perfectly rigid. They were cold; they felt ashamed. Now and then, they sputtered a speech without understanding it, and while they spoke their great black Hebrew eyes wandered round the audience-chamber, stupefied.

I leave the theatre. Amid the darkness that surrounds me, I hear cries in the corner of the square. A few Maltese, no doubt, who are engaged in explaining something with knives.

I return to my hotel, slowly, by way of the ramparts. Adorable odours of orange-trees and thuyas rise from the plain. The air is soft, the sky almost cloudless. Below, at the farther end of the road, rises the ghost of an old wall, the remains of some ancient temple. That wall is sacred. Every day the Arab women flock there to hang their votive offerings upon it, — fragments of stuffs, long tresses of ruddy hair tied with silver threads, pieces of burnous. All this is floating in the moonrays to the soft breath of the balmy night.

THE LOCUSTS.

ONE more recollection of Algeria, and then we will return to my mill.

The night of my arrival at that farm-house in the Sahel I could not sleep. The novelty of the country, the agitation of the voyage, the barking of the jackals, also an enervating oppressive heat, a choking atmosphere as if the meshes of the mosquito net did not allow of the passing of a breath of air. When I opened my window at dawn a heavy summer fog, slowly moving, fringed at its edges with black and rose, floated in the air like a cloud of smoke on a battlefield. Not a leaf stirred, and in the beautiful gardens which lay before my eyes, the vines planted at regular distances on the slopes exposed to the sun which makes those sugary wines, the fruits of Europe sheltering in a shady corner, the little orange-trees, the mandarins in long microscopic lines — all these wore the same mournful aspect, the stillness of leaves expecting a storm. The banana-trees themselves, those great reeds of a tender green, always shaken by a breeze ruffling their delicate fine hair, now rose silent and erect in regular bunches.

I stood a moment looking at this marvellous plantation, where all the trees in the world were collected, giving, each in its season, their flowers and their exiled fruits. Between the wheat-fields and the groves of cork-trees, a stream of water shone, refreshing to the sight on this suffocating morning; and while I admired the luxury, the perfect order of all before me, and the beautiful farm-house with its Moorish arcades, the terraces white in the dawn, the stables and sheds around it, I reflected that twenty years earlier, when the good people who owned the place had come to settle in this valley of the Sahel, they had found nothing but a wretched hut and a barren land bristling with dwarf palms and cactus. All to create, all to construct. At every moment revolts of the Arabs. The plough was left in the furrow to fire the musket. Besides this, diseases, ophthalmias, fevers, failure of crops, the groping of inexperience, struggles with a narrow-minded administration forever changing. What efforts! What fatigue! What incessant watchfulness!

And even now, though the bad times were over, and fortune was dearly won, they both, the man and his wife, were the first to be up in the morning. At this early hour I heard them going and coming in the great kitchens of the lower floor, superintending the coffee of the labourers. Soon a bell rang, and a moment later workmen defiled along the road, — vineyard men from Burgundy, Kabyle labourers in rags wearing the red fez, Mahonese navvies with bare legs, Maltese, Italians; an in-

congruous, dissimilar populace, difficult to manage. To each of them the farmer, standing before the door, gave his task for the day in a curt voice, rather roughly. When this was over, the good man raised his head, examined the sky with an anxious air, and seeing me at the window he said: "Bad weather for farming; here's the sirocco."

And sure enough, as the sun rose, puffs of burning, suffocating air came to us from the South as if from the door of an oven opening and shutting. Presently one knew not where to put one's self, or what to do. The whole morning passed thus. We took coffee on the straw mats in the gallery, without courage to speak or stir. The dogs lying at full length in exhausted attitudes sought coolness on the flags. Breakfast revived us a little, a plentiful and singular breakfast, in which there were carp, trout, wild boar, hedgehog, Staouëli butter, wines of Crescia, guavas, bananas, a mass of strange food in keeping with the complex Nature that surrounded us. . . We were about to rise from table. Suddenly at the glass-door, closed to protect us from the furnace heat of the garden, loud cries were heard: "The locusts! the locusts!"

My host turned pale, like a man to whom a great disaster is told, and we rushed out hastily. During the next ten minutes the house, lately so calm, was filled with the sound of rushing feet, confused voices, lost in the agitation of that warning. From the shade of the vestibules where some were still sleeping, the servants sprang forth, with sticks, scythes, flails, making them ring on all the

metal utensils they could lay their hands on, copper caldrons, warming-pans, saucepans. The shepherds blew their pipes in the pastures. Others had conch-shells and hunting-horns. The uproar was frightful, discordant, while high above it all rang the shrill high note, the "Yoo! yoo! yoo!" of the Arab women rushing in from a neighbouring *douar*. It seems that often a great noise, a sonorous jarring of the air, is sufficient to drive off the locusts and prevent them from alighting.

But where were they, these terrible beasts? In the sky, pulsing with heat, I saw nothing but a cloud on the horizon, brassy, compact as a hail-cloud, coming on with the noise of a wind-storm through the branches of a forest. This was the locusts. Supporting one another with their dry extended wings they flew in a mass; and in spite of our shouts, our efforts, on they came in a cloud casting upon the plain an enormous shadow. Soon they arrived above us and we saw for a second on the edges of the cloud a fringe, a rent. Like the first stones of a hailstorm, a few detached themselves, distinct, reddish; then the whole cloud broke up and the rain of insects fell thick and noisily. The fields, as far as the eye could reach, were covered with locusts, enormous locusts, thick as my finger.

Now the massacre began. A horrid sound of crushing, like that of trampled straw. With harrows, spades, ploughs, they broke up that living soil; but the more they killed, the more there were to kill. The insects swarmed in layers, their long legs laced

together. Those at the top made leaps of fear, jumping at the noses of the horses harnessed for this strange labour. The farm-dogs, those of the *douar*, driven into the fields, sprang upon them and ground them furiously with their teeth. At this moment two companies of Turcos, bugles sounding, came to the succour of the luckless colonists and the butchery changed aspect.

Instead of crushing the locusts the soldiers spread long trains of gunpowder and blew them up.

Weary with killing, sickened by the fetid odour, I returned to the house. Within it there were almost as many locusts as without. They had entered by the doors, the windows, the flues of the chimney. Along the panels and wainscotings, in the curtains already riddled, they crawled, fell, flew, and climbed the white walls, casting gigantic shadows that doubled their ugliness. And always that horrifying odour. We were forced, at dinner, to go without water. The cisterns, basins, wells, fish-pond were all infected. That night in my room where quantities had been killed, I heard them swarming under the furniture, with that crackling of their shell-like wings which sounds like the bursting of pods under heat. This night again I could not sleep. Besides, every one on the farm was astir. Flames were running along the surface of the ground in all directions from one end of the plain to the other. The Turcos were still killing.

The next day, when I opened my window the

locusts were gone; but what ruin they had left behind them! Not a flower, not a blade of grass; all was black, devoured, calcined. The banana, the apricot, the peach-trees, the orange-trees could only be recognized by the shape of their stripped branches; the charm and the floating grace of foliage which is the life of the tree were gone. The pieces of water and the cisterns were being cleaned. Everywhere labourers were digging the earth to kill the eggs laid by the insects. Every turf was turned, and carefully broken up. And one's heart ached to see the thousand white roots full of sap which appeared in this destruction of the fruitful earth.

THE ELIXIR OF THE REVEREND PÈRE GAUCHER.

"DRINK that, neighbour, and you will tell ~~tales~~ me what you think of it."

And drop by drop, with the minute care of a lapidary counting pearls, the curé of Graveson poured me out a glassful of a green, gilded, warm, sparkling, exquisite ~~liqueur~~. My stomach was all sunlit by it.

"That is the elixir of Père Gaucher, the joy and health of our Provence," added the worthy man with a triumphant air. "It is made at the convent of the Prémontrés, two leagues from your mill. Is n't it worth all the chartreuse in the world? If you only knew how amusing it is, the history of that elixir! Listen, and I will tell it to you."

Then, very artlessly and without the slightest malice, sitting there in the dining-room of his parsonage, so innocent and so calm, surrounded by the Way of the Cross in little pictures and his white curtains starched like a surplice, the abbé told me the following rather sceptical and irreverent narrative after the style of a tale of Erasmus or d'Assoucy: —

Twenty years ago the Prémontrés, or rather "the White Fathers" as they are called in Provence,

had fallen into great poverty. If you had seen their house in those days you would have grieved over it.

The great wall and the Pacôme tower, were disappearing in fragments. All around the cloister, overgrown with grass, the columns were splitting and the stone saints crumbling in their niches. Not a window left; not a door that closed. Through the yards, in the chapels, the Rhone wind blew as it does in Camargue, extinguishing the tapers, bending the lead of the sashes, driving the water from the holy basins. But, saddest of all, was the steeple of the convent, silent as an empty pigeon-house; and the fathers, for want of money to buy them a bell, were forced to ring for matins with wooden castanets.

Poor White Fathers! I can see them now in the procession of the Fête-Dieu, defiling sadly in their ragged cloaks, pale, thin, fed on pumpkins and water-melons; and behind them Monseigneur the abbot, coming along with his head down, ashamed to show in the sun his tarnished cross and his white woollen mitre, all moth-eaten. The ladies of the Confraternity wept for pity in the ranks, and the portly standard-bearers scoffed among themselves under their breaths as they pointed to those poor monks: —

"Starlings get thin when they live in flocks."

The fact is, the unfortunate White Fathers had themselves begun to ask whether it were not better to break up the community, and each take his flight alone through the world in search of a living.

One day, when this grave question was being discussed by the Chapter, some one entered and announced to the prior that Frère Gaucher asked to be heard before the council. You must know, to guide you, that Frère Gaucher was the cattle-keeper of the convent; that is to say, he spent his days going from arcade to arcade of the cloisters, driving before him two emaciated cows to browse upon the grass in the cracks of the pavement. Brought up till he was twelve years old by an old crazy woman of the region, who was called Tante Bégon, received at that age into the convent, the luckless lad had never learned anything except how to drive his beasts and say his Paternoster; and the latter he said in Provençal, for his brain and his mind were as hard and dull as a leaden dirk. Fervent Christian, however, though a little visionary; living with comfort in a hair shirt, and flagellating himself with robust conviction, and with such an arm!

When he was seen to enter the Chapter room, simple and stolid, bowing to the assembly with his leg behind him, prior, canons and bursar they all began to laugh. That was usually the effect produced, wherever seen, of that good, kind face with its grizzled goat's-beard and its rather crazy eyes. Frère Gaucher himself was unmoved.

"My Reverends," he said in his simple way, twisting his chaplet of olive-stones, "it is a true saying that empty casks hum loudest. Would you believe it, by dint of digging into my poor head, which was hollow enough already, I believe I have

found a way to get us out of our difficulties. This is how: You all knew Tante Bégon, that worthy woman who took care of me when I was young (God rest her soul, the old slut! she used to sing villanous songs when drunk). I have to tell you, my reverend fathers, that Tante Bégon, in her lifetime, knew as much and more, about mountain herbs as a Corsican blackbird; so that in her last days she concocted an incomparable elixir by mixing together five or six species of simples which she and I used to go and gather on the Alpilles. That's many fine years agone; but I think that with the help of Saint Augustine and the permission of our Father-abbot, I may be able, by careful search, to remember the composition of that mysterious elixir. If so, we should need only to put it in bottles and sell it rather dear to enrich the community gently, gently, like our brethren of La Trappe and the Grand — "

He was not allowed to finish. The prior rose and fell upon his neck. The canons grasped his hands. The bursar, more excited than even the others, kissed respectfully the ragged edge of his cassock. Then they all returned to their seats to deliberate; and before the session broke up the Chapter decided to intrust the cows to Frère Thrasybulus, in order to enable Frère Gaucher to give himself wholly to the making of his elixir.

How did the good brother manage to recover the recipe of Tante Bégon? — at the cost of what efforts? what vigils? History saith not. But what

is certain is, that by the end of six months the liqueur of the White Fathers was already very popular. Throughout the Comtat, throughout the whole region of Arles, not a farm, not a granary that did not have in its storeroom, among bottles of boiled wine and jars of pickled olives, a little brown flask, sealed with the arms of Provence, and bearing the effigy on a silver ticket of a monk in ecstasy. Thanks to the vogue of its elixir, the convent of the Prémontrés grew rich very rapidly. The Pacôme tower was rebuilt; the prior had a new mitre, the church certain handsome painted windows; and within the delicate tracery of the steeple a whole company of bells alighted one fine Easter morning, carolling and tintinnabulating in joyful peals.

As for Frère Gaucher, that poor lay brother, whose rusticities had so long enlivened the Chapter, there was no thought of *him* any longer. Henceforth he was known as the Reverend Père Gaucher, man of intellect and great learning, who lived completely apart from the petty and manifold occupations of the cloister, shut up all day in his laboratory, while thirty monks were roaming the hills in search of his odorous herbs. This laboratory, into which no one, not even the prior, was allowed to enter, was an old abandoned chapel at the farther end of the canons' garden. The simplicity of the good fathers made something mysterious and formidable out of it; and if, by way of adventure, an occasional little monk, bold and inquisitive, climbed among the vines to the rose-

window of the portal, he slid down very hastily, terrified, on catching sight of Père Gaucher, with a necromantic beard, stooping over his boilers, hydrometer in hand, and, all around him, retorts of rose-marble, gigantic stills, coils of crystal pipe, — a fantastic medley which flamed like witchcraft through the red glare of the painted window.

At close of day, while the last Angelus was ringing, the door of this place of mystery opened discreetly, and the Reverend took his way to the church for evening service. 'T was a sight to see the greeting he received as he crossed the monastery! The brethren lined up in hedges along his way, whispering: —

"Hush! he knows the secret! . . "

The bursar followed and spoke to him with bowed head. In the midst of all this adulation the worthy father advanced, mopping his forehead, his three-cornered shovel hat tipped back around his head like a halo, while he himself looked complacently about him on the great courtyards now full of orange-trees, the blue slate roofs where the new vanes were twirling, and the cloister — dazzlingly white between its elegant and floriated columns — where the canons in their new gowns filed along, two and two with placid faces.

"It is to me that they owe it all!" thought the Reverend, and every time he did so, the thought sent puffs of pride into his heart.

The poor man was well punished for it. You shall see how.

Picture to yourself that one evening after the service had begun, he arrived at the church in a state of extraordinary agitation: red, out of breath, his hood awry, and so bewildered that in taking holy water he soaked his sleeves to the elbow. At first it was thought to be emotion at coming late to church; but when he was seen to bow low to the organ and to the stalls instead of doing reverence to the altar, to rush through the nave like a whirlwind and wander about the choir unable to find his stall, and then, once seated, to bow to right and left, smiling beatifically, a murmur of amazement ran through the aisles. From breviary to breviary the whisper flew: —

"What is the matter with Père Gaucher? What *can* be the matter with our Père Gaucher?"

Twice the prior, much annoyed, dropped the end of his crozier on the pavement to order silence. In the choir the psalms were going on all right, but the responses lacked vigour.

All of a sudden, in the middle of the *Ave verum*, behold Père Gaucher flinging himself back in his stall and singing out in a startling voice: —

> "Dans Paris, il y a un Père Blanc,
> Patatin, patatan, tarabin, taraban. . ."

General consternation. Every one rose, shouting out: —

"Take him away! he 's possessed of the devil!"

The canons crossed themselves. Monseigneur's crozier rapped furiously. But Père Gaucher saw nothing, heard nothing; and two vigorous monks

were forced to drag him away through the little door of the choir fighting like a maniac and shouting louder than ever his *patatin, taraban.*

The next day, at dawn, the unhappy man was on his knees in the prior's oratory, making his *mea culpa* with torrents of tears.

"'T was the elixir, Monseigneur; the elixir overcame me," he said, striking his breast. And seeing him so heart-broken, so repentant, the good prior himself was much moved.

"Come, come, Père Gaucher, be calm; it will all dry up like dew in the sun. After all, the scandal was not as great as you think. It is true the song was a little — hum! hum! But let us hope the novices didn't understand it. And now, tell me, please, how the thing happened. . . In trying the elixir, was it? You must have had too heavy a hand. . . Yes, yes, I understand. Like Schwartz, inventor of gunpowder, you were the victim of your own invention. But tell me, my good friend, is it really necessary that you should try the elixir on yourself?"

"Unfortunately, Monseigneur, though the gauge will give me the strength and degree of the alcohol, I can't trust anything but my own palate for the taste, the velvet of the thing."

"Ah! very well. . . But listen to me. When you taste the elixir thus, from necessity, does it seem to you nice? Do you take pleasure in tasting it?"

"Alas! yes, Monseigneur," cried the hapless father, turning scarlet. "For the last two nights

it has had an aroma, a bouquet! . . I am certain it is the devil himself who has played me this vile trick. And that's why I am fully determined to use nothing but the gauge henceforth. No matter if the liqueur is not as good. . . "

"That will never do," interrupted the prior eagerly. "We must n't expose ourselves to the discontent of customers. You must be careful, now that you are warned, to be upon your guard. Come, how much do you need for the test? Fifteen, or twenty drops? call it twenty. The devil will be pretty clever to catch you with twenty drops. . . Besides, to avoid all accidents, I exempt you from coming to church any more. You will say the evening service by yourself in the laboratory. . . And now, go in peace, my Reverend, but, above all, — count your drops."

Alas! — in vain did the poor Reverend count his drops; the demon had him fast and would not let him go.

The laboratory heard queer things!

In the daytime all went well. Père Gaucher was calm; he prepared his chafing-dishes, his distillers, sorted his herbs carefully — all of them Provençal herbs, delicate, gray, dentelled, full of fragrance and sunshine. But at night, when the simples were infused, and the elixir was simmering in those great copper basins, the martyrdom of the poor man began.

"Seventeen . . . eighteen . . . nineteen . . . twenty! . ."

The drops fell one by one into the silver-gilt goblet. Those twenty, the Father swallowed at a gulp, almost without any pleasure. It was only the twenty-first which he coveted. Oh! that twenty-first drop! . . To escape temptation he went and knelt at the farther end of the laboratory and buried himself in his paternosters. But the warm liqueur still sent up a little steam laden with aromatic perfumes, which floated around and brought him, *nolens volens*, back to the pans. . . The liqueur was then of a beautiful golden green. . . Stooping over it, with flaring nostrils, Père Gaucher stirred it gently with his blowpipe and in the golden sparkles that rolled in that emerald stream he seemed to see the eyes of Tante Bégon, laughing and snapping out as she looked at him.

"Come, take another drop!"

And from drop to drop, the luckless man ended by filling his goblet to the brim. Then, overcome at last, he let himself fall into a big arm-chair, and there, helpless in body, with eyelids half-closed, he sipped his sin slowly, saying to himself in whispered tones with delicious remorse: —

"Ah! I've damned myself — I'm damned."

The worst of it was that at the bottom of that diabolical elixir he found, by I don't know what witchcraft, all the vile songs of Tante Bégon, and among them, invariably, the famous rondo of the White Fathers: *Patatin, patatan.*

Imagine what confusion the next day when his cell neighbours would say, maliciously: —

"Hey! hey! Père Gaucher, you had grasshop-

bers in your head when you went to bed last night."

Then followed tears, despair, fasts, hair-shirts, and flagellations. But nothing availed against the demon of that elixir. Every evening at the same hour the demoniacal possession was renewed.

During this time, orders rained on the monastery like a benediction. They came from Nîmes, Aix, Avignon, Marseille. Day by day the place assumed, more and more, the air of a manufactory. There were packing brothers, labelling brothers, corresponding brothers, and carting brothers. God's service lost, this way and that, a good many strokes of the bell; but the poor of the region lost nothing at all, I can tell you that.

However, one fine Sunday morning, just as the bursar was reading to the assembled Chapter his account for the end of the year, and while all the good canons were listening with sparkling eyes and smiles upon their lips, Père Gaucher burst in upon the conference, crying out: —

"Enough, enough! I'll do it no more! Give me back my cows."

"What's the matter, Père Gaucher?" asked the prior, who suspected what it was.

"What's the matter, Monseigneur? Why this: that I am on the road to a fine eternity of flames and pitchforks. The matter is that I drink, and drink like a ~~wretch~~ — " misérable . . .

"But I told you to count your drops."

"Count my drops, indeed! It is goblets I count

by now. . . Yes, my Reverends, I 've come to that. . . Three flasks a night. . . You see for yourselves it can't go on. . . Therefore, make the elixir by whom you will. May God's fire burn me if I touch it again."

The Chapter did not laugh this time.

"But, unhappy man, you will ruin us," cried the bursar, flourishing his big book.

"Do you prefer that I should damn myself?"

On that the prior rose.

"My Reverends," he said, extending his handsome white hand on which shone the pastoral ring. "There is a way to arrange all this. . . It is in the evening, is it not, my dear son, that the demon tempts you?"

"Yes, Monseigneur, regularly, every evening. So that now, when evening comes, I have, saving your presence, great sweats, like Capitou's donkey when she sees her load."

"Well, be comforted. In future, every evening at service-time, we will recite on your behalf the orison of Saint Augustine, to which plenary indulgence is attached. With that, whatever happens, you are safe. It is absolution during the sin."

"Oh! if that is so, thank you, Monseigneur."

And without another word Père Gaucher returned to his distillery as gay as a lark.

From that moment, every evening at the end of complines, the officiating priest never failed to say: —

"Let us pray for our poor Père Gaucher, who

is sacrificing his soul for the interests of the community: *Oremus, Domine . . .*"

And while over all the white hoods prostrate in the shadows of the nave Saint Augustine's prayer passed quivering, like a little breeze over snow, on the other side of the convent, behind the glowing windows of the laboratory Père Gaucher could be heard singing at the top of his lungs: —

"Dans Paris il y a un Père Blanc,
Patatin, patatan, taraban, tarabin ;
Dans Paris il y a un Père Blanc
Qui fait danser des moinettes,
Trin, trin, trin, dans un jardin
Qui fait danser des — "

Here the good father stopped, terrified.

"Mercy upon me! suppose my parishioners were to overhear that!"

IN CAMARGUE.

To my friend Timoleon Ambroy.

I.

THE DEPARTURE.

Great excitement at the château. A messenger has just brought a line from the gamekeeper, half in French, half in Provençal, announcing that already three or four flocks of *galéjons* and *charlottines* have passed, and that birds of *prime* were not lacking. From that instant everybody had the fever. One got ready the cartridges, another tried on the leggings. In large baskets, carefully handled on account of the bottles wrapped in straw, provisions were heaped, heaped, as if we were starting for the desert. At last, all was ready. One morning, in a four o'clock dawn, the break drew up before the portico.

In the yards, only half awake, the dogs were leaping with joy and pressing against the railings at sight of the guns. Old Miracle, the dean of the kennels, Ramette, Miraclet, take their places between our legs, and presently we are bowling along the road to Arles, a little dusty and a little barren on this December morning when the pallid verdure

of the olive-trees is scarcely visible, and the crude green of the scarlet oak looks unreal and wintry. The stables are all astir. Risers before dawn are lighting up the windows of the farmhouses; and beneath the arches of the abbey of Montmajour ospreys, still torpid with sleep, flap their wings among the ruins. Already we are meeting old peasant-women trotting slowly to market on their donkeys. They come from Ville-des-Baux. Six full leagues to sit an hour upon the steps of Saint-Trophyme and sell their little bunches of simples gathered on the mountain!

And now here we are at the ramparts of Arles; low crenelated ramparts, such as we see in old engravings where warriors armed with lances appear above battlements that are smaller than they. We crossed at a gallop the marvellous little town, one of the most picturesque in France with its carved and rounded balconies overhanging the roadway almost to the centre of the narrow street, and its old black houses with the little Moorish portals, low and pointed, which carry you back to the days of William Short-Nose and the Saracens.

At this hour no one is in the streets. The quay of the Rhone alone is lively. The steamer that plies to the Camargue is puffing at the foot of the steps, ready to be off. "Men of all work" in jackets of a sort of brown drugget, girls from the Roquette going to hire themselves out on the farms, went on board when we did, laughing and chattering. Under the long, brown, and hooded mantle, drawn close because of the sharp morning

air, the tall Arlesian head-dress gives a small and graceful look to the head, with a touch of pretty sauciness and a desire to toss it, as if to fling the laugh or the jest still farther. . . The bell rings; we start. With the triple speed of the Rhone, the screw, and the mistral the two shores unfold themselves rapidly. On one side is Crau, an arid, stony plain. On the other the Camargue, greener, and continuing to the sea its short grass and its marshes full of reeds.

From time to time the vessel stopped near a wharf, to right or left, "to empire or kingdom," as was said in the middle-ages, in the days of the Kingdom of Arles, and as the old mariners of the Rhone still say. At each wharf, a white farm-house and cluster of trees. The labourers go ashore with their tools, the women, baskets on their arms, pass erect down the gangway. Toward the empire or toward the kingdom, little by little the boat empties; and by the time it arrives at Mas-de-Giraud, where we landed, there was scarcely any one on board.

The Mas-de-Giraud is an old farm-house of the Seigneurs of Barbentane, which we now entered to await the arrival of the gamekeeper, who was to fetch us at that point. In the lofty kitchen, labourers, vineyard-dressers, shepherds were at table; grave, silent, eating slowly and served by women who only ate after them. Soon the keeper appeared with the *carriole*. True type *à la* Fenimore, trapper on earth and water, fishkeeper and gamekeeper, the people of the country round

called him "lou Roudeïroù" [*le rôdeur*, the prowler] because he was always to be seen in the mists of dawn or the twilight hour on watch, hidden among the bushes or else motionless in his little boat, employed in observing his nets on the *clairs* [the ponds] and the *roubines* [canals for irrigation]. It was perhaps this business of perpetual watching that made him so silent, so self-contained. Still, while the little *carriole* loaded with guns and baskets rolled along in front of us, he gave us news of the hunting, the number of passing flocks, and the places where the migratory birds had alighted. As we talked we were advancing deeper into the country.

The cultivated land once passed, we found ourselves in the heart of the wild Camargue. As far as the eye could reach among the pastures, marshes and irrigating streams glittered through the herbage. Bunches of reeds and tamarisks lay like islands on the bosom of a calm sea. No tall trees. The uniform aspect of the vast plain is unbroken. Here and there were cattle-sheds and sheepfolds, stretches of low roofs almost level with the ground. The scattered herds lying on the salty grass, or the flocks pressing closely round the russet cape of the shepherd, did not interrupt the great uniformity, diminished as they were by the infinite space of blue horizons and the open sky. Like the sea, uniform in spite of its waves, the plain conveys a sense of solitude, of immensity, increased by the mistral, which blows without relaxing and without obstacle and by its powerful

breath seems to flatten and so widen the landscape. Everything bends before it. The smallest shrubs keep the imprint of its passage, and continue twisted and bent toward the south in an attitude of flight.

II.

THE HUT.

A ROOF of reeds, walls of reeds, dry and yellow, that is the hut. This is the name we give to our hunting-box. Type of a Camargue house, it has but one room, lofty, vast, and no window, getting its light from a glass door, closed at night with solid shutters. Along the great plastered walls freshly whitewashed, racks await the guns, game-bags, and marsh boots. At the farther end five or six cots are ranged around a real mast planted in the ground and rising to the roof, which it supports. At night, when the mistral blows and the house cracks everywhere, and the wind brings with it the roar of the distant sea, increasing and swelling the sound, one might think one's self lying in the cabin of a boat.

But in the afternoon it is that the hut is charming. On our fine days of Southern winter, I like to be left all alone near the high chimney where a few roots of tamarisk are smouldering. Under the assaults of the mistral or the tramontane, the door bursts in, the reeds cry out, and all these

little shocks are a mere echo of the great agitations of Nature going on around me. The winter sun lashed by the wind scatters itself, joins its beams, and again disperses. Great shadows flit beneath a glorious blue sky. Light comes in jerks, noises also, and the bells of the flocks heard suddenly, then forgotten, lost in the wind, return to sing at the shaken door with the charm of a chorus. The exquisite moment is the twilight hour, just before the hunters come back. Then the wind calms down. I go out for an instant. In peace the great red sun descends, flaming, yet without heat. The night falls; it brushes me in passing with its damp black wing. Over there, at the level of the soil, the flash of a gun runs along with the light of a ruddy star, brightened by the environing darkness. For the rest of the day, life hastens. A long triangle of ducks fly low, as if they meant to take to earth, but the hut, where the lantern is now lighted, keeps them away. He who heads the column draws in his neck and mounts, while others behind him utter savage and angry cries.

Presently an immense pattering is heard like a noise of rain. Thousands of sheep, called in by the shepherd, and driven by the dogs whose confused gallop and panting breath can be heard, are hurrying to the fold, timid and undisciplined. I am invaded, brushed against, surrounded by this cloud of curly wool, all bleating; a perfect mob, in which the shepherds and their shadows seem borne along in a bounding flood. Behind the flock come

well known voices, joyous voices. The hut becomes animated, noisy. The roots flame. They laugh the most who are most weary. It is a laughter of happy fatigue, guns in the corner, the great boots flung away pell-mell, the gamebags emptied, and close beside them, plumages, red, golden, green, silvery, all stained with blood. The table is laid, and in the fumes of a good eel-soup silence reigns; the silence of robust appetites, interrupted only by the ferocious growls of the dogs lapping their porringers before the door.

The evening will be short. Already no one is left but the keeper and myself beside the fire, and that is blinking. We talk, or rather, we toss to each other, now and then, the half-words that characterize the peasantry, interjections almost Indian, short and quickly extinct, like the sparkles of the now consumed roots. At last the keeper rises, lights his lantern, and I hear his heavy step going out into the darkness.

III.

A L'ESPÈRE! (ON THE WATCH.)

L'ESPÈRE! — hope! — what a pretty name by which to describe the watch, the expectation of the ambushed huntsman and those undecided hours when everything waits, *hopes*, hesitates between day and night. The watch of the morning a little before sunrise, the watch of the evening in the

twilight! It is the latter that I prefer, especially in this marshy region, where the ponds hold the light so long.

Sometimes the watch is kept in the *negochin*, a very small boat, narrow, without keel, and rolling at the slightest motion. Sheltered by the reeds, the sportsman watches for the ducks lying in his boat, above which nothing is seen but the visor of a cap, the muzzle of a gun, and the head of a dog snuffing the wind, snapping at the gnats, or else, with his big paws extended, hanging over the side of the boat and filling it with water. That watch is too complicated for my inexperience. So I usually go to the *espère* on foot, paddling through the marsh in those enormous boots that are cut from the whole length of the leather. I walk slowly, cautiously, for fear of being sucked in. I push through the reeds full of briny odours where the frogs are hopping.

At last here 's an island of tamarisks, a spot of dry earth, where I install myself. The keeper, to do me honour, leaves me his dog, a huge dog of the Pyrenees with a great white coat, hunter and fisher of the highest order, whose presence does not fail to intimidate me slightly. When a waterfowl passes within aim of my gun he has a certain sarcastic way of looking at me; throwing back, with an artist's toss of the head, the long, limp ears that overhang his eyes; then he poses to a point with a quivering motion of his tail and a whole pantomime of impatience, which says to me, "Fire! Come, fire!" I fire and miss. Then,

lying down at full length, he yawns and stretches with a weary, discouraged, and insolent air.

Well, yes! I admit that I am a bad sportsman. The watch, for me, means the falling day, the fading light taking refuge in the water, in the ponds that gleam, polishing to silvery tones the gray tints of a sombre sky. I love that smell of water, the mysterious rustle of insects in the reeds, the little murmur of the long leaves waving. From time to time a sad note passes, rolling through the sky like the rumbling sounds in a sea-shell. It is the bittern, plunging into the water his immense, fisher-bird's beak and snorting — rrrououou! Flocks of cranes file above my head. I hear the rustle of wings, the ruffling of down in the clear air; then nothing. It is night, profound darkness, except for a gleam still lingering on the water.

Suddenly I am conscious of a quiver, a sort of nervous sensation, as if some one were behind me. I turn, and see the companion of beautiful nights, the moon, a large moon, quite round, rising gently with an ascending motion, at first very perceptible, then apparently diminishing as she leaves the horizon.

Already the first ray is distinct beside me, and another is a little farther off. . . . Presently the whole swamp is illuminated. The smallest tuft of grass casts its shadow. The watch is over, the birds see us; we return. We walk in the midst of an inundation, a dust, of vaporous blue light, and every step in the pools and the marches scatters the stars and the moon-rays which lie in the water to its depths.

IV.

THE RED AND THE WHITE.

CLOSE to us, within gunshot of the hut is another hut which resembles ours, but is more rustic. It is there that the gamekeeper lives with his wife and elder children. The daughter attends to the feeding of the men and mends the fishing-nets; the son helps his father to take up the seines and watch the sluices of the ponds. The two younger children are at Arles with their grandmother, and there they will stay till they have learned to read and have made their *bon jour* [good day, first communion]; for here their parents are too far from church and school, and besides, the air of the Camargue would not be good for the little ones. The fact is that in summer, when the marshes dry up and the white clay of the pools cracks in the great heat, the island is scarcely habitable.

I saw that once in the month of August when I came to shoot young wild-duck; and I shall never forget the sad, ferocious aspect of the burnt-up landscape. From place to place the empty ponds smoked in the sun like monstrous vats, keeping low at their bottom a remainder of water, of life, which stirred with a crawling swarm of salamanders, spiders, and water-beetles seeking for damp spots. At the keeper's house all were shivering,

each had the fever; and it was really piteous to see those drawn, yellow faces, the black-circled eyes of those poor unfortunates, compelled to drag themselves about for three months under an inexorable sun which burned the sufferers but did not warm them. Dreary and painful life is that of a gamekeeper in Camargue! This one at least had his wife and children with him; but two leagues farther on, in a marsh, lives a horse-keeper, absolutely alone from one end of the year to the other — a Robinson-Crusoe existence. In his hut of reeds, which he built himself, there is not a utensil he did not make, from the braided osier hammock, the fireplace of three stones, the roots of tamarisk cut into stools, to even the lock and key of white wood which close this singular habitation.

The man is as strange as his dwelling. He is a species of philosopher, silent as a hermit, sheltering his peasant distrust of every one behind his bushy eyebrows. When he is not in the pastures you will find him seated before his door, deciphering slowly, with childish and touching application, one of those little pink, blue, or yellow pamphlets which wrap the pharmaceutical phials he procures for his horses. Though the huts are near together, our keeper and he never visit each other. They even avoid meeting. One day I asked the *roudeiroù* the reason of this antipathy. He answered gravely: "On account of opinions: he is red; I am white."

So in this desert, where solitude might have brought them together, these two savages, both

ignorant, both naïve, these two herdsmen of Theocritus, who go to the city scarcely once a year, and to whom the little cafés of Arles, with their mirrors and their gilding, are as dazzling as the palace of the Ptolemies, have found means to hate each other on account of their political convictions.

V.

THE VACCARÈS.

THE finest thing in the Camargue is the Vaccarès. Often, abandoning the hunt, I go and sit on the shore of that salt lake, a little sea like a bit of the ocean captured and shut in by earth and content with its captivity. In place of the dryness, the aridity that casts sadness everywhere, the Vaccarès, with its rather high banks, green with a velvety fine grass, exhibits an original and charming flora, centaureas, water-trefoil, gentians, and the pretty *saladelle*, blue in winter, red in summer, which changes colour with change of atmosphere, and in its ceaseless blooming marks the seasons with diverse tints.

Towards five in the afternoon, as the sun declines, these three leagues of water, without a boat, without a sail to limit them, transform their extent and take on a charming aspect. It is no longer the charm of the pools and the ponds appearing now and then in a dip of the marly soil, beneath which one feels the water percolating. Here the

impression is broad and fine. From afar this radiance of water allures great flocks of divers, bitterns, herons, flamingoes with white bosoms and rose-coloured wings, all standing in line to fish along the shore in a manner that exhibits their various tints in a long even strip. Also the ibis, the true Egyptian ibis, who feel themselves much at home in the silent landscape beneath that splendid sun. From the place where I lay I could hear nothing but the water rippling and the voice of the keeper, calling to his scattered horses on the brink. They all had resounding names: "Cifer! (Lucifer) Estello! Estournello!" Each animal, hearing itself called, came galloping up, mane streaming, to eat his oats from the hand of the keeper.

Farther on, still on the same shore, was a vast herd of cattle peacefully feeding like the horses. Now and then I could see above the clumps of tamarisk the line of their bent backs and their small horns as they raised their heads. Most of these oxen of the Camargue are raised to run in the *ferrades*, the village fêtes, and some have names that are even celebrated in the circuses of Provence and Languedoc. Our neighbouring herd counts among others the "Roman" who has ripped up I know not how many men and horses in the races at Nismes, Arles, Tarascon. Consequently, his comrades have accepted him as leader. For in these strange herds, the animals govern themselves by laws, grouped around some old bull whom they take for leader. When a hurricane falls upon Camargue, terrible in that great plain

where nothing diverts it, it is a sight to see the herd pressing together behind its leader, all heads turning to the wind their broad foreheads where the strength of the ox is concentrated. The Provençal herdsmen call that manœuvre *vira la bano au giscle* — turning horn to the wind; and sorrow to the herd that does not do so. Blinded by rain, driven by wind, the routed herd turns upon itself, is terrified, dispersed, and the distracted animals, rushing before them to escape the tempest, plunge into the Rhone, the Vaccarès, or the sea.

BARRACK HOMESICKNESS.

THIS morning, at the first gleam of dawn, the loud roll of a drum awoke me with a start: Ron plon plon! Ron plon plon!

A drum among my pines at such an hour! Singular, to say the least of it.

Quick, quick, I jumped out of bed, and ran to open the door.

No one. The noise has stopped. From among the wet creepers two or three curlews fly out, shaking their wings. A slight breeze sings in the leafage. To eastward, on the delicate summit of the Alpilles lies a golden dust from which the sun is slowly issuing. A first ray touches already the roof of the mill. At that instant the drum, invisible, begins to beat again in the covert: Ron — plon — plon, plon, plon!

The devil take that ass's skin! I had forgotten it. But who can the savage be who salutes Aurora in these woodland wilds with a drum? In vain I looked about me; I saw nothing — nothing but tufts of lavender and pine-trees racing downward to the road. In that thicket there must be some imp, engaged in making fun of me — Ariel, no doubt, or Master Puck. The scamp has said to himself as he passed my mill: —

"That Parisian is too tranquil here. I 'll give him a serenade."

On which he takes a big drum, and — Ron plon plon! Ron plon plon! Will you be quiet, you rascal of a Puck? you 'll wake my grasshoppers.

It was not Puck.

It was Gouguet François, called Pistolet, drummer of the 31st infantry, off on a fortnight's furlough. Pistolet is bored in the country; he is homesick, that drummer, and when the village is willing to lend him its drum, he goes off to the woods in melancholy mood to beat it and dream of his barracks.

It was on my little green hill that he had come to dream on this occasion. There he stands against a fir-tree, his drum between his legs, rejoicing his heart. Coveys of startled partridges rise at his feet without his seeing them. The wild thyme is balmy about him, but he does not smell it.

Neither does he notice those delicate spider-webs trembling in the sunshine among the branches, nor the spicy pine-needles that skip on his drum. Absorbed in his dream and his music, he lovingly watches his sticks as they tap, and his big, silly face expands with delight at each loud roll.

Ron plon plon! Ron plon plon!

"How fine it is, our big barrack, with its paved courtyard, its rows of windows, all in a line, the men in their forage-caps, and the low arcades where the canteens rattle!"

Ron plon plon! Ron plon plon!

"Oh! that echoing staircase, the white-washed corridors, the close dormitory, the belts that one pipe-clays, the blacking-pots, the iron bedsteads with their gray coverlets, the guns that glitter in the rack!"

Ron plon plon! Ron plon plon!

"Oh! the good days in the guard-house, the cards that stick to one's fingers, that hideous queen of spades with feather furbelows, and the old tattered Pigault-Lebruns lying round on the camp beds."

Ron plon plon! Ron plon plon!

"Oh! the long nights mounting guard at the gates of the ministries, the chinks in the sentry-box which let in the rain, the feet that are always cold, and the fine gala coaches that spatter you as they go by. Oh! that extra duty, the days in the stocks, the vile-smelling bucket, the wooden pillow, the cold reveille of a rainy morning, and the taps of a foggy night, when the gas is lighted and the roll-call brings every one in all breathless!"

Ron plon plon! Ron plon plon!

"Oh! the forest of Vincennes, the white cotton gloves, the walks on the ramparts. Oh! the Barrière de l'École, the soldier's girl, the cornet in the Salon de Mars, the absinthe in the garden, the secrets between two hiccoughs, the sabres unsheathed, the sentimental song — sung with a hand on one's heart!"

Dream, dream, poor man; it is not I who will prevent you; tap your drum boldly, tap hard with

all your might. I have no right to think you ridiculous.

If you are homesick for your barrack, have not I, I myself, a longing for mine?

My Paris pursues me even here—like yours. You drum beneath the pines and I make copy.—Fine Provençals we are, i' faith! Down there, in the barracks of Paris we regret our blue Alpilles and the fresh wild odour of lavender; but here, in the heart of Provence we miss our barracks, and all that recalls them to us is precious.

Eight o'clock is striking in the village. Pistolet, not relinquishing his drumsticks, starts to go back. I hear him, descending through the pines, still drumming. And I, lying on the grass, sick with nostalgia, I fancy I see, to the sound of the drum as it recedes, my Paris, the whole of my Paris defiling among the firs.

Ah Paris! . . Paris! . . Forever Paris!

LETTERS TO AN ABSENT ONE.

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THE SURRENDER.

Written Feb. 6, 1871.

I DO not know what bravura air they will sing to you in the theatre at Bordeaux apropos of the siege and the surrender of Paris; but if you want to know, once for all, my sentiments on that lamentable affair, here they are in two words: —

Our valiant generals — may the devil take them! — defended the ex-capital just as they might have defended Mézières, Toul, or Verdun, after a certain military code which on leaving school each one carries under the lining of his képi: "Article I. A besieged city never unbesieges itself." Yet they parted from that precept and attempted to raise the siege.

Remark in passing that these same tacticians, eight days before the siege, told us with adorable self-sufficiency that we might be carried by assault, but never invested — never.

Oh yes! generals of the Good God, we *could* be invested. The Prussians have broad paws, and although Paris has a big waist she found herself, in less than a week, pinched in like a wasp by those

old veterans; but if you generals had had the pluck we might even then have got out of the difficulty. Paris is a giant; and you ought to have let her fight as a giant; you ought to have given freedom to her genius and put in motion all her muscles. When the Marne hampered you, Paris should have swallowed the Marne. Those terrible heights of Châtillon, Meudon, Champigny, all those mills, all those knolls, the ridiculous and bloody names of which pursue us in our dreams, Paris, with one kick, could have sent them to the moon. It was a matter of four hundred thousand spades working for a month behind a hundred thousand muskets; but you would not hear of it.

Ah! the true history of that siege, it is not in newspapers or in books that we must look for it; we should go to the ministry of war. *There* were fought the great battles before Paris. *There* were wrecked against the leathern bucklers of military bureaucracy all individual efforts, all good wills, all ardent enthusiasms, all great ideas for the defence of the city. It was pitiful to see Minister Dorian and his staff of the Public Works so active, so intelligent, going from bureau to bureau, making himself humble, even small, and supplicating, with clasped hands: —

"For pity's sake, gentlemen of the War Department! We know how insignificant we are; the cleverest of us cannot serve to even brush your Guiods and your Frébaults. Yes, you are right, our engineers are asses, our contractors under-

stand nothing; but never mind that, — do try our little pieces of 7 loaded at the breech, and our flying supply-waggons, which can pour hogsheads of hot coffee and wine down your soldiers' throats even on the battlefield, and our stationary balloons which, without costing you the life of a single man, can reconnoitre and make sure whether the batteries on the Châtillon are really only stove-pipes, as it is said they are."

And how proud they were, those brave Public Works men, when, after five months of entreaty, efforts, and documents of all kinds, they succeeded in getting to the front a few of those "pieces of 7" — about which one of our great generals said in his slightly cracked faubourg voice: —

"Not so bad, this commercial artillery! I really must see about buying some."

Too late, general. The Prussians have got them all.

Now, the end is come. Paris has once more eaten white bread and butter. There is no going back to the past. At first I raged, — my God! how I raged, — but of late, I feel within me, in the depths of me, something relaxed, something restful. It was so long, my dear friend, so long, that siege! so agonizing, so monotonous! It seems to me as if I had just spent five months at sea in a dead and almost continual calm.

And to think that for certain persons those five months of enervating sadness were intoxicating — a perpetual fête. From the privates of the National Guard, earning their forty-five sous a day for doing

nothing, to the majors with seven stripes, constructors of barricades in chambers, ambulance fellows of Gamache, all shiny with good meat juice, fantastic free-lances parading in cafés and calling the waiters with omnibus whistles, commanders of the National Guard billeted with their mistresses in the public apartments, all the hucksters, all the tricksters, the dog-stealers, the cat-hunters, the sellers of horse-hoofs, albumen, gelatine, the pigeon-raisers, the owners of milch cows, all those having notes in the sheriff's hands and those who dislike to pay their rent, — to every one of them the end of the siege is desolation; there is not a patriotic thought among them. Paris free, they were forced to return to the ranks, to work, to face life, to give up the gold lace, the public apartments, and return to their kennels, — ah! it was hard.

Certainly I do not wish to calumniate the Republic. In the first place, I do not yet know what it is; then, having seen very closely the men and the things of the empire, I have no right to cavil. Nevertheless, what has been going on around me since the fourth of September has filled my soul with bitterness, and made me more sceptical than ever. All those that I knew to be fools, loafers, idlers, incapables have come to the surface and found offices. Be it understood that I am not speaking of republicans by conviction, faithful men, men of the night before; they have had their turn, and it was just; but I speak of the others, those whom that sad empire would not have had in its lowest offices, — they are provided for now, — even to

that miserable, that pitiable N. . . whom we saw during the death-struggle of the late reign begging from all the ministries an office, no matter what; here he is now commissary of police in a blood-thirsty arrondissement.

Another strange thing is to see —in the midst of the great political hurly-burly — the immutability of certain men and certain situations. The most complete type of these *hommes-bouées* — human buoys, who float in all weathers and come to the surface of the water no matter what may happen — is the worthy secretary-general of the ci-devant legislative body. All the journalists of Paris know this long individual with the livid face, thin lips, sad smile, head of an acrobat and a beadle, who is always to be seen seated at a little table, above the tribune and behind the presidential chair. I like to think that the place is a good one, for it is now more than thirty years that the worthy man has clung to it; it would need a bold wind-sweep to topple him from that height. Kings have gone, empires have crumbled, the torpedoes of the republic have blown the Assembly to bits, but the little table of M. Valette has not budged, and never will budge.

Talk to me of in-dis-pen-sa-ble men! He is one; or at least he makes us believe he is, and that is why he is so strong. It seems that no one in France, not even M. Thiers, knows parliamentary law as he does. So that if he were not here the parliamentary machine would be unable to perform its functions. Outside of those terrible rules and

regulations, as to which he is pitiless, he is a man all suppleness and all concession. "If your Excellency desires it," he says in a sugary voice, bowing to the ground before M. Palikao. This was said on September 4, at midday. September 6, at the same hour, he entered the salons of the Place Beauvau and, with the same obsequious smile, the same bend of his courtier hips, he said to M. Gambetta: "If your Excellency will kindly permit me." And this time — as ever before — they have left him tranquil at his little table, with the keys of the Palais in his pocket, a picket of the National Guard before his door to do him honour; and for the last five months he has had nothing to do but to pick violets on the beautiful lawns of the presidency and draw his pay regularly. Now that the Chamber has opened at Bordeaux he is down there, smiling as usual, at his little table behind the presidential arm-chair.

A saying of this amiable personage will complete his portrait. One of his subordinates attempted on some occasion to oppose him, openly relying on the protection of M. Schneider, then president of the legislative body. M. Valette summoned the poor devil into his cabinet, and there, gently and without anger, he slipped into him between skin and flesh, as they say, this memorable remark:—

"Take care what you are about, my friend; presidents are not eternal."

M. Valette *is* eternal.

He is called "The Administration."

THE DICTATORS.

DO you remember No. 7 rue de Tournon and that famous Hôtel du Sénat where we have eaten so many Reims biscuits in the dust? I passed before it this morning on my way to look at the bombarded quarter. The house is still the same; the courtyard as black and damp, the great windows of the dining-room as cloudy as they were a dozen years ago, but the room itself seemed to me less noisy.

What a racket was there — in our day — at dinner-time! Always a dozen Southern students — of the worst South — with rusty beards too black, too shiny, shrill tones, extravagant gestures, and long, drooping noses which gave them the look of a horse's head. Heavens! how insufferable those young Gascons were! What excitement out of nothing, what silliness, what assurance, what turbulence! One of them especially, the loudest bawler, the most gesticulating of the band, remains, more particularly, in my memory. I can see him now as he entered the room, round-backed, rolling his shoulders, blind of one eye, and his face all inflamed.

As soon as he entered, the other horse-heads sprang up around the table and greeted him with a formidable neigh: —

"Ha! ha! ha! here's Gambetta!"

They pronounced it, the monsters! *Ghambetthâh*, and a mouthful it was!

He, sitting noisily down, spread himself over the table, or threw himself back in his chair, perorated, rapped with his fist, laughed till the windows shook, dragged the table-cloth about him, spat to a distance, got drunk without drinking, snatched the dishes from your hands, the words from your mouth, and, after having talked the whole time, went away without having said a single thing; Gaudissart and Gazonal in one; that is to say, all that can be imagined most provincial, most sonorous, and most tiresome. I remember that once I invited to our table a little employé of the city, a cold lad, very self-contained, who had just made his début in the Charivari, signing the name of Henri Rochefort to theatre articles in a prose as sober and reserved as his own person. Gambetta, to do honour to the journalist, seated him on his right, the side of his sound eye, and soaked him all the evening with his eloquence, so well and so long that the future chairman of the Committee on Barricades, carried away from my dinner a stupendous headache which cut short our relations. Since then I have greatly regretted him.

You see, my dear absent friend, how mistaken we can be about men. How many times did we say that that flower of the Tarn-et-Garonne would return to his own region and flatten himself day by day between the heavy folios of a provincial code in the neighbourhood of Auch or Pézenas,

We never once suspected then that we had before us a great orator in the germ, a deputy, a minister, a dictator; and that from that disorderly brain, that flux of language, thick and muddy as the waters of a pool, would one day gush a word of power which seemed to some the very breath itself of the Nation.

How came it so? By what mysterious operation did this Tholomyès of the *table d'hôte* turn into a great man so suddenly? I have my own idea about it; but it is a poetical idea, and you will laugh when I tell it to you. Nevertheless, nothing can be more real. It came from the day when he acquired a glass eye, a beautiful blue eye, with an inalterable iris — from that day dates the metamorphosis and the high destiny of Gambetta. That glass eye was probably a fairy; and in bringing light to the cyclops face she gave him, by the same stroke of her wand, intellect, power of expression, the gift of command, and, above all, the gift of malice. For he is malicious, that Gascon! No other proof is needed than that galloping consumption about which he made us all so pitiful last year, and which will certainly take its place in history, a little lower than the crutches of Sixtus V. in the storehouse of the properties and artifices of great men.

But what his glass eye never could relieve him of were his terrible Southern accent and his epileptic gesticulation. In those respects he was always the former Gambetta of the rue de Tournon; and persons who knew him well were able, without

leaving Paris, to follow him, step by step, in his provincial heroics. We could see him thumping his fist on the balcony of prefectures and casting to the astounded echoes of the market-places or the great squares a formidable and roaring: "Citoyeïns!" Also we could imagine him inspecting a camp of Mobiles, or heading a patriotic funeral, head down, back rounded, gait rolling, a red foulard knotted crookedly round his throat, and his right arm flung carelessly on the shoulder of one of his Mamelukes, — Spuller, Pipe-en-Bois, or Chose.

Just think! if one had the heart to laugh, what a jolly vaudeville one might make with that title: "The Mamelukes of Gambetta." What airs and bedizenment they gave themselves, all those ninnies, those obscurities, those incapables, whom that glass eye dragged for one moment out of their native dusk! What junketings! what fêtes! and how hard it must have been to renounce it all. It should, in justice, be said that the business of mameluke had, at times, a cruel side. I remember seeing, some four or five months ago, the head of the cabinet, Spuller, in a terrible position. It was on the Place Saint-Pierre at Montmartre, one windy afternoon under a broiling sun. In the middle of the square, Nadar, wearing his aëronaut's helmet, was flaming away. In a corner, the enormous yellow balloon, lying on its side, was slowly inflating. All around, stood an immense crowd come to see the minister of the Interior mount up into the sky with the head of his cabinet. In the dis-

tance, a dull but incessant cannonading was heard.

I don't know why it was, but that vast blue sky, the yellow balloon, that Delegate of the Defence about to fly upward like a bird, the giant city with its many quarters in which the thunder of the siege guns was lost among the myriad street noises — all these things had something fantastic and Chinese about them which made me think vaguely of the siege of Pekin. To complete the illusion, the worthy M. Spuller, in a long furred coat, opened wide his eyes like circumflex accents and gazed with horror at the preparations for this unusual departure — the vast sky, Paris below it in a fog, and the great yellow creature swelling up to sight and dragging at its ropes. The poor mameluke was piteous to behold. He was pale, his teeth chattered. Once or twice I heard him say, quite low, in a daft voice: —

"It is, truly, a most extraordinary thing."

Most extraordinary, indeed, Monsieur Spuller.

A MUSHROOM BED OF GREAT MEN.

ABOUT the year LXVII. of the republican hegira, in the middle of the month floréal, when the trees of the boulevard Montmartre were beginning to tint with green, the citizen Carjat, amiable poet and photographer, and behind him a whole covey of young lyricals, thinking that the absinthe of the Café des Variétés tasted of straw, crossed the roadway with a dignified step and hung up their lyres and their hats on the hooks of the opposite café. It was thus, that the great future destiny of the Café de Madrid began.

Up to that time it was only a large, rather melancholy tavern, with faded divans and clouded mirrors, where one found old numbers of "Iberia" lying about, and a few Spaniards, gilt and wrinkled as Cordova leather, drinking chocolate *bavaroise* silently. The noisy invasion of the lyric poets dispersed these hidalgos, but the tavern-keeper lost nothing. That machine for shaking hands called Carjat, once installed near the café window, harpooned the passers in the streets, and, thanks to his adroit and continual fishing, the Café de Madrid became in a very short time the fashionable literary drinking-place; something like the divan Lepelletier, but more mixed, more lively — the little bourse of the Beaux-Arts.

A newspaper in process of being founded, a book about to appear, the opening of the Salon, an exhibition at Martinet's, now and then an exchange of slaps between two lyricals, a little duel on the Île Saint-Ouen with effusion of sour wine, these were, in those days, the great events of the place. As for politics, they were little thought of. And yet, the fine flower of the Commune was there, expanding on the benches; but who the devil would have thought it? All those young fellows seemed so little cut out for dictators, and they were still so far from thinking of it themselves.

Vallès, his nose in his absinthe, joked, sneered, spied on others from the corner of his eye, and watched the café, seeking types for his book on "Refractories." He had talent, that Vallès, before the Commune; but a talent without suppleness, without imagination; very limited as to dictionary; the words "flags, rags, bayonets," recurring continually and merely to give a false ring to his sentences. But with it all, a very individual way of seeing and saying things, a certain joyous ferocity, wit that was wholly his own, and a sufficiency of literature. In those lugubrious tales to which he devoted himself we could guess the bitter laugh, the eyes suffused with bile, of a man whose childhood was wretched, and who hates humanity because, when he was young, he was forced to wear ridiculous garments made from his father's old overcoats.

Beside Vallès, the big painter Courbet, conventional peasant, puffy with pride and beer,

laughed in his beard and shook his fat, saying evil of *Rophoel.*

Farther on, a tall thin fellow in spectacles, with the curled and silly head of a lawyer's clerk and a look as if he had just come from Fortunio's office, was going about from table to table distributing copies of his first book, — "Desperanza" by Vermorel, a work with a philosophic purpose, written in the groves of Bullier with the sentimentality of the Latin quarter. As literary promise it was scarcely worth more than the novels of Paschal Grousset.

The latter often came to the Café de Madrid. A pretty little gentleman, gloved, pomatumed, and curled with tongs, having, both for speech and writing, that deplorable gift which is called facility, and with it a craving to make the world turn on that curious given name of his — Paschal. Poor Villemessant, who was always open to the seductions of dress, and who, in his last years especially, looked less to the talent of his writers than to the tying of their cravats, was charmed with this perfumed Corsican. Novels, items, science for a sou, Don Pasquale did them all for the "Figaro," and as many as he pleased. But inasmuch as what he specially desired to do was to make a noise, and his literature made none, he ended by getting tired of it and went over, as they said at Madrid, to the table of the Politicals.

Here 's what that famous table was. It happened that one day the machine called Carjat, swinging his great arms in the café window, caught on the

fly a young law-student, named Gambetta, already celebrated in all the plum-shops of the boulevard Saint-Michel — the law-students and licentiates go there in flocks like starlings. Behind Gambetta was Laurier, then *Mossieu* Floquet, then Spuller, then Lannes, then Isambert, all of them great politicians, and consumers of beer. These gentlemen, on arriving, took possession of a corner of the café and never left it until the revolution of September 4. It was there, on that "table of the Politicals," a noisy, gesticulating table, that Gambetta's fist exercised itself for five years in parliamentary pugilism; the marble is still there, split like the rock of Roland.

Later, at the farther end of the café, was formed what was called "the corner of the Pure." There, among a group of old sachems with long beards, solemn and dogmatic ventriloquists, snorted Père Delescluze, nervous and high-strung as an Arab steed. With his cameo profile, his feverish gesture, his fanatical blue eyes — eyes so young beneath those white eyebrows — he reminded me of a certain commander of the regulars of Abd-el-Kader, whom I had formerly known in Algeria, whom the Arabs venerated as a saint because he had made, I don't know how many times, the journey to Mecca.

Père Delescluze had never been to Mecca, but he had returned from Cayenne, and among his own party that counted to him for quite as much. He was the Hadji of the democracy. There were men in the departments who had travelled two

hundred leagues merely to look at him and lay their hand upon the skirt of his coat.

That fact gave us at times very delectable comedies. One day I saw a man from Narbon, familiar and hail-fellow-well-met as they are down there, lead up to the table of the saint a whole delegation of Narbonese. Never shall I forget that presentation.

The man from Narbon, proud of his Delescluze, tapped him on the back, leaned upon his shoulder, hooked him by the buttonhole, and called him from one end of the café to the other: *Delescluzès!* winking to his compatriots as if to say "Hein! you see how I speak to him." During this time the worthy Narbonese gazed at the saint with humid eyes, sighing, raising their arms to heaven, and giving way to all sorts of naïve and exaggerated expansions, like the savage Friday when he found his old father at the bottom of the boat. The saint, who is a clever man, did not know where to poke himself, and seemed much displeased. Near him, a little man with a gray tuft of beard under his chin, the head of a kind goat, and light-coloured humourous eyes, smiled with a touched air as he drank his absinthe. This was that brave Razoua, a former spahi, who flung himself into politics to please Révillon, and never doubted that some day he should be deputy of Paris and director of the École Militaire.

Little by little, however, without any one taking notice of it, the physiognomy of the café was

ransformed. Of the men of letters of the first eriod, some, like Banville, Babou, Monselet, had led, frightened away by the stupid racket; others were dead, such as Baudelaire, Delvau, and Charles Bataille. Some, like Castagnary and Carjat himself, had gone over to Gambetta. Politics had evidently seized upon all the tables.

But worst of all was when Rochefort founded "The Marseillaise." Then a cloud rained down upon us of students, old and pretentious, improvised journalists, without wit, without spelling, as ignorant of Paris as Patagonians, children with beards, who thought themselves called upon to regenerate the world, pedants of republicanism, all wearing waistcoats *à la* Robespierre, cravats *à la* Saint-Just, — the Raoul Rigaults, the Tridons, the youth of Schools who had no youth and no scholarship, did not love to laugh, and were sulky and savage; celebrities of Belleville, such as the famous planner of the club of things, pawn-heads, greasy collars, greasy hair; and all the cracked-brains, the trainers of snails, the saviours of the people, all the discontented, all the good-for-nothings, all the idlers, the incapables —

And to think that those are the men who for a year past have guided France! To think that from the coarsest to the silliest there was not one frequenter of the Café de Madrid who has not been something — dictator, minister, deputy, general, commissary of police, inspector of camps, colonel of the National Guard! And how luck has favoured them! A few, it is true, got nothing

after September 4; but March 18 repaired that injustice. That time nothing was allowed to go begging. They are all members of the Commune now, even that poor devil of an Andrieux, a chiromanician with a corroded face, who used to wander timidly behind our chairs, begging for our hands and calling us "dear master."

The place may truly be termed an historical café. If the revolution triumphs it is on the tables of the Café de Madrid that the new laws will be written.

ROCHEFORT AND ROSSIGNOL.

THE Rochefort whom I knew on my arrival in Paris was a worthy youth of rather melancholy temperament, living modestly with his father on a fourth floor of the rue des Deux-Boules, and using himself very hard to earn the bread of the household. A petty employment at the Hôtel de Ville, a few articles in the *Charivari* paid for at six farthings a line (which, to tell the truth, were not worth more), from time to time a "curtain-raiser" for Plunkett or Cogniard — these were the makings of a gray and tranquil half-life, which resembled his writings, but did not go with that very eccentric countenance, those thin and peevish lips, that great worn brow, and a head always aching, pale, tortured, nervous, which formed at that time his only originality.

What I liked in that Rochefort was a certain bravado of demeanour, a very keen taste for poesy, for pictures, and especially for that *science* of Paris, that boulevard experience which he had even then in the highest degree as the son of a vaudevillist, brought up at Charlemagne and the Café du Cirque. With that exception, there was nothing marked about him: cleverness without excess, regularity in his work, the manners and

ways of a clerk, and no other ambition than t see his name often on the posters in compan with that of Clairville or Siraudin. Such was th Henri Rochefort of 1860. The other, the Roche fort of the *Lanterne*, came later, and it is to Ros signol that we owe him.

This Rossignol was a clerk of the city whom one met everywhere, — at first representations, a funerals; who was always asking, with an anxiou air, "Have you seen Rochefort?" and who spen his life in following him, missing him, awaiting him, fetching him his cabs, carrying his copy to the papers, repeating his sayings, imitating hi gestures; and who finally ended by cutting out o Rochefort's shadow a species of personality of hi own. The type is rather frequent on the boulevard All men who become a little known drag Ros signols after them. Such individuals, who hold a intermediate place between servants and confidants need an equable temper, the instincts of a hanger on, and some means; for the business is all-absorb ing and ill-rewarded, and sometimes requires out lay. It so chanced that Rochefort's Rossigno had, over and above these necessary qualification for his part, a certain originality of his own.

He was a great Panurge with long flat hair, a singular mixture of artlessness and cynicism, o timidity and impudence, stupidity and satire youth and decrepitude — twenty-two years old and the whims of an old man, a cane with an ivory handle and a snuff-box. The most silent and gloomy of beings, and then, suddenly, an excess

of wild gayety, cold excitement, outrageous jests *à la* Bache; insulting persons in the streets without motive, simply for the pleasure of gabbling; foaming, saying everything, either droll or indecent, that came into his head, with the gestures of an epileptic, the eyes of a Pierrot, and the sad laugh, the prolonged laugh, of emaciated men.

I still ask myself how this demoniac ever penetrated into the peaceful life and intimacy of Rochefort. Certain it is that they were never apart. When Rossignol committed follies Rochefort was there to repair them; he fetched him from the guard-house, took him back to his parents, stuffed him with theatre tickets, walked about with him on the boulevard — which made my Rossignol very proud, and gave him early a taste for celebrity. One fine day he too wanted to write, or, at any rate to see his name in a newspaper. Rossignol, a man of letters! It was so droll that Rochefort could not resist. He put him in that establishment of lunatics called *Le Tintamarre*, and knowing him incapable of writing a single line — even there — he amused himself by writing his articles for him.

Then occurred a singular thing. This Rochefort, stiff and dull when he wrote for himself, assumed in behalf of another a trivial, crazy liveliness which resembled Rossignol's own personality; incarnating himself in that burlesque type, he acquired all its eccentricities, all its effrontery. The maddest things that came into his head, the things one dares not say, the scum of the pen, the

mud of the ink, seemed to him good enough fo Rossignol; and as he mingled with them his ow *flair* of Paris and his clever vaudevillist knack o managing effects, there resulted a species of facetiou literature, coldly frenzied, illustrative to indecency not French at all, but very Parisian, dislocated i style, sentences turning summerset, which secure the fortune of *Le Tintamarre* and made Rossigno famous from the Café de Suède to Bobino. O that day Rochefort found his manner. He did no deceive himself as to that; and after a few month of such exercise, when he knew his trapèze thor oughly, he said to the other, "Go alone!" an henceforth he did Rossignol on his own accoun

The unfortunate satellite, abandoned to himsel did not do so badly, — living a little on his reputa tion and a little on what he had learned from hi master. Then some money was bequeathed t him, and hey! the ladies of Bobino, the journalists the suppers, the gay bohemian life! In short, th poor fellow came to the end he wished for: h killed himself by sitting up o' nights, and wen away to die in the gentle land of Cannes, i the neighbourhood of Victor Cousin and othe celebrated persons, which caused him a certai satisfaction.

Rochefort had various reasons for not throwin himself into the same way of life. In the firs place, his stomach, — one of those terrible gastra gic stomachs, always irritated, ruined at birth, b which the Michelets of the future will not fail t explain his literary temperament. Besides, wher

would he have found the time to dissipate? He had enough to do to keep up with that hurricane of Parisian vogue which fell upon him like a thunderbolt, uplifted him, shook him, scattered his budding fame from the Jockey-Club to the wilds of America, spreading about him a tremendous and laughable popularity by which he was himself dumbfounded. People pointed him out to one another, and fought for him. Race-horses bore his name. Courtesans pursued him. "Show me your Rochefort," said the Duc de Morny whenever he met Villemessant. For it is well to know that if Rochefort is culpable all Paris has been his accomplice. We spoilt him. We said too often: "How droll he is, that Rochefort!" You, yourself, O Veuillot! you laughed. And how determined he was, that fellow, to make us laugh! How afraid that his fame would escape him! Which of us has not seen him biting his nails, the day after one of his articles, asking himself anxiously: "What can I tell them next?" And so, when he felt that his vein was exhausted, when he had nothing more to say, he did as Rossignol had done; he relied on audacity and said all, *all* — in the Rossignol language. Hence the success of the *Lanterne*.

Ah! my friend, God keep us from a success like that. When a man has once tasted it he never ceases to drink it, no matter at what price, and no matter in what glass. In hospitals you can see unfortunate men cursed with alcoholic madness, flinging themselves thus on anything they can find;

vitriol, eau de Cologne, all is good to them, provided they can drink it. This is Rochefort's condition. If that man of intelligence, if that gentleman is picked up of a morning in the gutter of the Père Duchêne, believe me, it is not political passion that drove him into it. Politics! did he ever even know what they are? Nor is it love of gain; I know him to be above that. No, it is an inextinguishable thirst for popularity, the alcoholism of success, with all its symptoms, — taste lost, stammering, mind wandering, madness.

At one moment we thought him saved. During the five months of the siege he had the courage to let himself be forgotten, to write no more; and this should be remembered in his favour. But after that, what a falling back! In his absence others had *done Rochefort*, and done it better than he. In vain he shouted and gesticulated, his popularity was lost, gone to the Maroteaus and the Vermesches. . . This is how I explain his anger, his delirium during the last days, that temporary insanity, that overflow of bile which drowned everything and blinded him as if his gall-bladder had burst.

In spite of all, rid him of his bile and his foam, and Rochefort will always remain a figure of this period. He came at his right time; he found the house wide open, as if he were expected. He was the providential missile — if providence there be about it — sent to break the first window of the Empire and give the signal of the general demolition. . . Even from the point of view of our pro-

fession, we ought to pay attention to him. His pamphlets often have fire, wit, and comic power. He gives me the effect of an exasperated Paul-Louis Courier, exactly on the level of his epoch and speaking to it in a language it understands. The two pamphleteers resemble each other in the part they have played, in their implacable hatreds, and in the artificiality of their style — for neither write naturally. But there is this difference between them, the same difference that there was between the two Courts, the one, where Horace was translated, the other where Theresa was invoked. Courier takes the affectation of his language from the old towers of the sixteenth century; Rochefort has picked up his in the brand-new slang of the nineteenth. In reading Paul-Louis I see old Amyot laughing at me between the lines. In reading Rochefort I think all the while of Rossignol.

THE SENTRY-BOX.

"THE impression made upon me by places is one of my troubles. I am affected by them beyond all reason."

These words of a nervosity wholly contemporaneous, which one might think were written yesterday, are really those of Mme. de Sévigné; and never, to my thinking, did she say anything more deeply felt or more profound.

There is, in truth, in the places where we live, a mysterious influence, issuing from wood, from stone; a malignancy in surrounding things which takes delight in troubling our souls, upsetting our ideas, and impressing our miserable brains beyond all reason. I don't remember now which little town in Algeria it was where the soldiers mounting guard at a certain point of the ramparts felt themselves seized, in less than an hour, with an insurmountable disgust for life. Two or three times a week some one or other of these poor devils was found hanging to a nail of the sentry-box; and the proof that there was something more in this than the mere nostalgia of recruits lay in the fact that as soon as the sentry-box was pulled down the epidemic of suicides ceased.

This was certainly a specimen of the *jettatura* mentioned by Mme. de Sévigné; but I know a still more striking instance. Don't you remember Émile Ollivier arriving from Saint-Tropez in the month of April, 1870, to construct that marvellous public building of a composite order called the Liberal Empire? He too, unfortunate fellow, had the malady of the sentry-box; and it was to evade its pernicious influence, to put himself as much as possible under shelter from the bad air which pervades great buildings in charge of the State, that he was firmly resolved not to take up his abode at the ministry.

"I shall go there in the morning," he said to his friends, "as an Englishman goes to his counting-room in the city. In the evening, business over, I shall shut up the office, and come back to the rue Saint-Guillaume."

And then, exciting himself with the idea of his coming liberalism, he continued enthusiastically:

"I will show them what a minister of Justice should be. No style in his household, no equipages. I shall go to the Chamber on foot, to the Tuileries on foot, and never then except to the Council of ministers. I am determined not to attend either the grand receptions or to the little suppers. That is where consciences are lost; and I intend to keep mine... Ah! they accuse me of having sold myself! well they shall see, they shall see."

In saying this the worthy man was sincere, and the execution of this fine programme was actually

begun. For some time the ministry of Justice, so stiff, so formal, was open to the public like any other vast assemblage of offices. Everything went on in American fashion. The minister received you without letters of audience. The antechambers stood empty, the ushers crossed their arms; in the gloom of the great deserted salons they could be heard wandering about with melancholy steps shaking their chains like captives. The head of the staff, one of those fat fathers with troublesome digestions who are always afraid of apoplexy, received the head-clerks in the courtyard, a cigar between his teeth, and wrote his signatures on his knees at the edge of the portico; which greatly scandalized the office servants of Monsieur Delangle, all of them as grave and pompous as magistrates.

As for his Excellency, had you seen him arrive in the morning through the arcades of the rue de Castiglione, spectacles on his nose, cravat awry, his long overcoat of the last provincial cut, and that fine new portfolio swelling with the projects of the Liberal Empire, you would have thought him an inspector of primary schools rather than the minister of Justice. This modest behaviour did him great harm at the Tuileries, where his crooked cravat kept the ladies of honour and the chamberlains a-laughing; but that did not trouble him. Faithful to his scheme of independence, the new minister had nothing to do with any one except the emperor, and he always left the imperial palace with his head high and his glance proud, having

not so much as a glass of *eau sucrée* on his conscience.

It was at the height of these great ministerial reforms that the killing of Victor Noir occurred. Poor Victor Noir! by merely writing his name, I see him crossing the boulevard in two strides, with his tall hat of rough gray nap, his pink cheeks, his athletic shoulders, that exuberance of strength and joy which he knew not how to give vent to, and that good, hearty desire to please that shone in his boyish eyes. If he were still living he would be only twenty-three years old! . .

But what is the good of talking of these things? The case has been judged and decided; the death of that lad is nothing to us now but a date in history — an unforgetable date, however. On that day a new personage, on whom the makers of plans never count, that tragical shuffler of cards called the Unexpected, entered suddenly upon the stage and since then has never left it.

At the first news of the drama at Auteuil, before the lawyers had taken possession of the corpse and paraded it everywhere on the tumbril of democratic exhibition, all Paris was roused to indignation, — Émile Ollivier more than any one. The night of the crime he walked up and down his office brandishing the letter in which Prince Pierre wrote to M. Conti, with the careless ease of a noble of the fifteenth century: "I believe I have killed one of them."

"Ah! he has killed one of them, has he?" cried the luckless minister in spectacles. "And he

thinks he can call it killing? — it is murder. Bonaparte though you be, you shall go to the galleys, monseigneur."

Meantime as it grew very late and the ministry was still full of people, — M. Grandperret, prefect of police, reporters, messengers, — the minister could not return home as usual to the rue Saint-Guillaume, and towards morning, dropping with fatigue, he went to the bed of his predecessor.

The next day, when he woke, he was no longer the same man. The indignation of the evening before had given place to conventional sadness, uttered in administrative language. The murder was nothing more than a dreadful misfortune, a very regrettable affair; one must wait; one must see. The influence of the sentry-box was beginning to be felt. On the following day, worse still. Paris was not yet pacified; it was judged necessary to remain *pro tem.* at the ministry. Little by little the habit was taken, so that after the miserable Noir affair was smothered, the minister's residence there became permanent. Ushers and halberdiers resumed their pompous pose at the doors of the reception-rooms; the bags of the chandeliers were removed, and the founder of the Liberal Empire was delivered over, without being himself aware of it, to the malignancy of furniture and of local officials.

From that day he became a perfect minister of Justice; suppressed newspapers, sequestrated individuals, supped at the Tuileries, watched his cravats, did all that he did not mean to do, and

burned all that he had formerly adored. His voice changed; from shrill it became sour. Contradiction was intolerable to him. Despotic to others, he became the courtier of the master, and when the war began, seeking for nought but favour, hallucinated by the air of the sentry-box, he could neither will anything, nor hinder anything. It was thus that he ruined France, and all of us, and himself, and his dream of a Liberal Empire as well.

Oh! the fatal influence of official sentry-boxes; who can feel himself sufficiently strong to resist it? Moderate liberals, irreconcilables, *indécousables*, the purest of the pure, in less than one year they all passed that way. I have before my eyes the pompous posters of the Central Committee on the morrow of March 18, also that species of pastoral letter, well floured with philanthropy, in which they disavowed with such indignation the murders in the rue des Rosiers. What protestations and promises did they not make to us! How often they said, "You will see." And what did we see? They had hardly entered the Hôtel de Ville, masters of the mayors and the ministers, before those givers of the holy water of political clubs became the most execrable of tyrants. Does this mean that all those fellows were rascals? No! Besides ferocious gamins, delirious rhetoricians who played at '93 and put their reading into action, besides adventurers, cynics, roysterers, there were men who believed themselves republicans, illuminati of socialism whose lives had hitherto been honest

and honourable. For them I ask some clemency. Borne suddenly into power, and overtaken by its vertigo, all the more because they were so little prepared for it, they are scarcely responsible for their acts. The atmosphere of the sentry-boxes had turned them into madmen.

THE TRICOTEUSE.

SOME eighteen or twenty years ago certain very young fellows from the provinces, arriving in Paris to seek their fortunes with their heads full of Balzac and their teeth of a fine length, were very seriously bent on reconstituting the Society of the Thirteen. They distributed the parts among themselves, and assigned to each his battle ground: "You — you are a handsome fellow; you shall be our de Marsay, you will succeed through women and salons. You, Blondet, by the newspapers. You Rastignac, in politics." All efforts, all resources were to be held in common. Those who had fine linen and varnished boots were to give them to de Marsay to enable him to go into society. All the wit they each possessed, their invention of clever sayings and ideas were to be scrupulously laid aside for the journalist. Clients were to be found for Doctor Bianchon; the political man must be brought forward and talked about in the cafés, — all this being wrapped in masonic mystery, passwords, private signals, and the rest of the pretty nonsense beneath which Balzac concealed at will the gravity and depth of his marvellous studies.

Unfortunately, such things may be dreamed and written, but they never live. Our Thirteen were not long in finding this out. At the end of about a week the agreement weakened; those who had fine linen preferred to wear it; the journalist had to make his wit for himself; the political man talked alone in the cafés, while his brethren thought only of emptying their mugs. In short, as our young men were not without intelligence (and the air of Paris gave them more and more daily), they ended by laughing in one another's faces and going off, each on his own line, to make their way. I don't know how they succeeded. I only remember that one of them — the one selected as the political man and from whom I received these details — found, after a while, his career and his adventures suddenly interrupted; his name was Jules Vallés.

Balzac, Mme. Sand, and all the great novel-writers of the modern school have often been reproached for having bemuddled quantities of young brains and ruined whole lives by turning them into fiction. But is that the fault of our novelists? Is it not more just to lay the blame on that need of imitation inherent in youth, especially French youth, impressionable and vain to excess, eternally tormented by the desire to play a part, to put on a celebrated skin, to be some one — as if the best means of being some one were not to remain one's self.

And as for this, if we are to make our novelists responsible for all these aberrations of young

brains what shall be said of our historians? They too, they have caused great ravages, especially of late years. Ever since this rage for historical studies came to us from England and from over the Rhine, ever since this avalanche of histories of the Revolution, of memoirs of Robespierre, Saint-Just, *l'Ami du peuple* the old *Cordelier*, descended upon us have we not seen the springing up of a whole generation of Young France, swathed in huge Jacobin waistcoats, carrying their heads *en Saint Sacrament*, and recalling the Convention by the multiplied folds of their muslin cravats? They do not now say: "You shall be de Marsay; I will be Rastignac." No, these say: "You shall be Saint-Just; I will be Robespierre"—which is quite as comical and much more dangerous. I positively heard four years ago, in a restaurant in the Latin quarter, young Gascons declaring in their devilish accent: "Hein! that Raoul Rigaut! what a fine Fouquier-Tenville he would make!" He did not fail to do so, the wretch! and we ought to do him the justice to say that he thoroughly filled his part. Vermorel played Robespierre and made no concealment about it, copying the man with the pointed nose in even his private life, his puritan morals, and the arrangement of his home like that of a country curate. They all had their '93 type at which they aimed. Sometimes there were two of the same; Robespierre-Vermorel had his double in the lawyer Floquet, who was called, among his intimates, Maximilien. At other times they cumulated, and one

man played two personages. I met last winter a pretty little officer of chasseurs, whom Young France had taught to think he was Hoche and Marceau in one. Not Hoche only, nor Marceau only. No! Hoche *and* Marceau! And he believed it, that innocent! You could not have made him laugh. Grave and proud, teeth clenched, gesture feverish, you had only to see him drink his absinthe to feel that within him were the terrible preoccupations of a man who hides beneath his overcoat the two great swords of the future republic, and is always in fear of losing one of them.

These things amused us then. None of us imagined that the comedy would end so tragically.[1] For my part, I regarded it all as a play, and when I could slip into their *coulisses* I delighted in watching the actors of the coming revolution delving at their parts, rehearsing, practising stage business, getting themselves up, and vamping over the old decorations for this renewal of '93, which they intended to give some day or other, but which I myself then thought impossible.

It was in this way that I chanced to be present at the formation of a corps of *tricoteuses* [knitters], of whom I just escaped being one of the organizers. The circumstances were as follows: —

It was during the siege, at the hardest moment of that hard winter of black cold and of black

[1] Strange to say, little is generally known, speaking comparatively, of the Commune of Paris, the horrors of which equalled those of '93. The reader is referred to M. Maxime Ducamp's history of it. — TR.

bread, when one could not step without jostling some baby's coffin carried in the arms and hurried along by the walls of houses. "It is heart-breaking, the number of children who are dying at Montmartre," said to me one of the most frantic of the Ninty-three-ers of the Café de Madrid. "The poor little things go barefooted in the snow. The cold is killing them like sparrows. It would be charity to give them stockings, good, warm, woollen stockings. I am organizing a subscription for it — how much will you give?"

The Ninety-three-er, of his own nature, is not sentimental. In the steel-blue regions where he soars there are no little children; there are only ideas, abstractions, and a few geometrical figures, such as the triangle and the guillotine. Consequently, I was rather astonished. My man perceived it, and in order to convince me, he added: "Come to-night to Montmartre. I am to speak in behalf of the object. You shall subscribe then if you feel inclined."

It was worth the trouble, and I made the journey to Montmartre.

The affair took place in a ballroom on the exterior boulevard; some Boule-Noir, or Élysée, or other, which had been transformed into a "club." It is to be remarked that the political education of the people of Paris takes place, as a rule, in the dance-halls.

When I arrived the session had already begun, the hall was full, — an immense hall of great length, well arranged for squads of quadrilles and the

glorification of the *cavalier seul* performance. A few petroleum lamps (Paris being now without gas); a little stove around which laurestinus in boxes were shivering like old men; on the seats an audience of workmen, lesser bourgeois, National Guards, Civic Guards, a few Mobiles, a few *jupillons* in velvet caps, five or six cocottes in ragged silk gowns; some had come for the club, others for the stove, and the cocottes from the habit of going to dance-halls every evening. And in truth there was something pervading the atmosphere like an echo of the former frou-frou; bits of mazurkas, bars of waltzes humming about the ceiling like last year's flies. Above it all, a thick mist, smelling of pipes and moist flesh.

Perched on the raised platform of the orchestra was my Ninety-three-er, speaking with melancholy emotion of the great misery of the people and the terrible mortality among little children. Suddenly he interrupted himself, retreated one step backward on the platform, arms outstretched, mouth open, eyes staring, the classic amazement of expressive heads.

"What do I behold, citizens?" he cried. "There, there, in the midst of you, a woman, that woman, who knits —"

He stopped for a moment as if suffocated by emotion, and stood still, arm extended. We all turned round and I saw, where he pointed, an old woman with a *canaille* head and that crooked lip and twist of the mouth from which one hears in the faubourg the tones of a blackguard of any

sex before he speaks. Under her cap and through her grizzled hair was a knitting-needle which stuck out like a dart and gave her the look of a dangerous beast. Her bony hands, which she lifted high, held the half-knitted stocking of a child.

While we looked at her the orator continued:

"Who is this brave woman, this citizen who comes to the club with her knitting, to listen while she works to patriotic words? Ah! now I recognize her! She is a knitter of Montmartre — one of those who knit, O people! that your children may be warm like the children of the rich; she knits that cold — in the person of Badinguet — may not cut the throats of all of them (*laughter and shouts of Good! good!*); that a few be left to see the dawn of a better day (*Bravo! bravo!*). O saintly knitters of Montmartre! you are worthy of your elder sisters; like them you will have your place in history. Knit, knit therefore, like them, for the People, for liberty! knit, knit, knit!"

There was no need to tell her to knit. Under the eyes of that crowd the old woman knitted without pause, energetically, and I caught a wink which she gave to her confederate. From that wink I understood the whole affair. I saw that the little children of Montmartre were only a pretext, and that the sole object was to raise a battalion of *tricoteuses*, to float once more a musty vocable of the dictionary of '93, to vamp over an old catchword of the first revolution.

Well, well! In spite of all, their revolution has turned out more original than they expected to make it. They wanted the *tricoteuse* and they got the *petroleuse*. That ought to teach this Young France something.

A YEAR OF TROUBLE.

NOTES OF A PARISIAN WOMAN.

BY MADAME DAUDET.

FACTS do not strike me, only the atmosphere which they create about them, the time of day when I became cognizant of them, the peculiar impression of which they ever after retain for me. That is what I shall now try to relate to you — I mean that singular emotion made up of the lessening echoes of great battles and the distant murmur of dying towns.

In the May of last year, fleeing from Paris already in trouble and saddened by an epidemic, we found at the little house in Seine-et-Oise the flowering trees and the usual quiet. Every day news reached us, accounts of riots every evening, those boulevard riots in which the railings of a theatre become a refuge and the newspaper kiosks attempts at barricades. These nightly tumults, which one drove to see in carriages, made me feel the triviality of that hurrying, shouting crowd, singing as if for a festival at an hour when the boulevard lamps give to the leafage of the trees the reflections of a village ball. The word "Revolution," then pronounced recalled to me my earliest childhood, a

flight through torn-up suburbs, and courtyards laid open by cannon-balls; also the emotion of those about me; emotion which children feel in the trembling of the arms that carry them, and the voice that speaks to them; and lastly, the country, which I saw again in sunshine, all blue like the mist of a dream, the arrival, the rest, all danger passed. This was like a lightning flash from the bottom of my memory; but the great moral shock, the deaths at the street corners, all those sinister things that my childish eyes had not perceived, I still did not imagine.

In this sad month of May Parisians were hurrying to the railway stations as they always do in spring. For many, who expected to return in the autumn, exile was actually beginning, a bathing-season prolonged to a year, a life in hotels far away from the home. Mothers were departing, little aware that they would never again see the beloved home, the family nest where they had warmly nurtured their dispersed children, and all unthinking that they should die away from it in a land of passage. Here a child is starting for a holiday who will be thought of later with regret for the hasty adieus and the long revoirs. Everywhere separated beings; and later, for all, a poignant uncertainty.

The small-pox, which had driven us from Paris, rapidly invaded our tranquil refuge. The few houses between the forest and the Seine were made uneasy by it for several days. Whole families were attacked, and twice I met the same

woman in mourning, who had walked a league in the dust and heat to attend the death-bed of a relation. I was working one afternoon at my window. The weather was fine; all was youth and song, the trees in their verdure, the flowers in bud. Some one said: "A man has just died close by you."

I had seen that man sometimes as he came along the road from the fields, carrying his tools, bent, weary, humble, and obscure. I don't know what great feeling moved me all of a sudden; without thinking about it, it seemed to me that death went past me, quite close, beautiful death; and as it passed it enlarged the sky, the horizon, suspending for a second all that springtide of life, respectful before the eternal silence.

Summer came, a superb summer of long days, rich and flowery. The air of the garden grew tinted, perfumed with blossoms that opened to the sun. The harvests promised to be magnificent. How many were left standing that year! How many ripened and were never gathered, but were lost, scattered, or burned in barns and granaries open to the winds! At this time the sunsets seemed to glow like conflagrations, and we felt, passing through our tranquil hours and deserted fields, a stormy breath that bent the wheat and made the dust of the high-roads whirl as if from a charge of cavalry. War had been declared.

The Marseillaises at the street corners; battalions crossing Paris and beating time with their steps "to

Berlin," lines of ambulances, collections taken up by the wayside for the white banners with the red cross. And then that sad departure of young lads, Mobiles, still mere school-boys, whom their mothers brought in carriages, with how many tears! And that formidable throng at the railway stations, that sad concourse as if the whole city were depopulating itself, in which one has so fully the sensation of crowds; the exhaustion, the bewildering lassitude of that great uproar. What a hum of departing trains! . . Hasten! they are cutting the rails over there, they are burning the stations. It seems as though each train were lost in the darkness; as if the battalions sown along the great plains might seek in vain to come together, to reunite. All is trouble and confusion. From time to time a word in the newspapers which chills the heart: "The enemy are pillaging the French waggons at Reims." We scent defeat, rout.

Every family felt the counter-blow of our disaster. I remember at a birthday fête how the flowers were quickly hidden and all eyes filled with tears; anxiety for the absent one, the dread of fresh departures; the table seemed too large, the house empty.

Soon we were forced to return to Paris. Never in my life shall I forget that August day; the peasant-women weeping at their doors as they watched the laden carriages and flocks of animals passing pell-mell along the roads; oxen fastened upon carts, and hand-barrows on the highway. Near to Paris the trees were cut down, the ram-

parts strengthened, crowded by workmen; and, in spite of the defeat, as it was Sunday and the sun was shining, women in white waists and light-coloured skirts who had come to look on at the works.

It is now September 4. A morning of expectation; something in the air like the vague shadow, foretold, which precedes a great eclipse. Towards midday the bakers close their shops, the streets empty. Fighting, they said, was going on in the Place de la Concorde. Paris is so vast that one never knows exactly what is happening. . . But no! from the boulevard a band of men are coming down singing at the top of their voices. The Republic is proclaimed. I feel very sad. It seems, however, that this is fortunate, but I do not like these songs of a crowd which take you by the throat, force emotion, and make it nervous. I would rather hear a clear, calm voice announce great things.

The next day, a visit to the camp at Saint-Maur. What flags! Paris was still gay, or rather, giddy. The war seemed forgotten. Perhaps because the Prussians were felt to be steadily advancing, and a trip beyond the gates — gates that were being armed and fortified and would soon be closed like those of a prison — was almost a boon. Much noise and dust. We went along the race-course, and the whole way resounded with the noisy gayety of Parisians who come out once a week to look at trees.

The lines of tents, under shelter of Vincennes, the little wars, the volleys of which escaped in a white smoke at the foot of low hills, and the dips in the ground, so well fitted to group episodes of battle, this going and coming of uniforms, of artillery, of people in Sunday clothes, of traders of all sorts, this morrow of revolution, driving with great noise in over-crowded *char-à-bancs*, remain fixed in my memory.

A few days later, still of a Sunday, the first cannon sounded under a clear blue sky. The very early hour, the quiet of the streets and neighbouring courtyards, the stillness of all the manufactories, of the thousand noises that one hears, and which fill the work-days, conversations at doors — signs of stoppage or of fête — everything about me made me think of former 15ths of August; the balconies decked with little lanterns, lines of gas-jets, and flowered with flags, the long avenue of the Champs-Élysées, the great quays of the Seine bathed in Bengal lights and a rain of gold. . . This time the cannon signified other things.

Again an appearance of fête, these pilgrimages to the statue of the city of Strasburg, bouquets in hand, bands at their head. Later that stone face was veiled in crape. And yet they did not swathe in black the statues of the tombs; their mourning garb was white, strewn with *immortelles*.

It was during these last days of sunshine that I saw, in the Palais-Royal, seated against a tree on the hard gravel of the public garden, two poor

women, two working-women, employed in making caps. Children were playing around them, two handsome, chubby children, rather sun-burned. The women were not Parisians, nor peasants either. Looking at them, one thought of the outskirts of Paris, some village square, doorways encumbered with linen drying, children playing, women working, of melancholy streets ending in fields, pavements full of grass, and horizons of fortifications. Poor people! they were all coming in, dragging their household goods with them, to lodge in Paris in I know not what dark hole; and, impelled by the habits of open air and outdoor life, these two had come to sit at the foot of trees, while the Mobiles were being drilled before the shops of the jewellers and the tables of the café. Exiles everywhere! These sad, homeless women, those tall fellows in blue blouses, all under their guns in the bent, patient attitude of beings accustomed to delve, to toil in the earth; listening to commands with the puckered brow of narrow intellects which have to collect themselves wholly before they slowly understand; after which they remember well. Such were the exiles from the provinces.

Where are those from Paris? Great cases full of light-coloured gowns, morning gowns, toilets for the seashore, for Casinos, canes of Louis Seize, little hats with enormous feathers — all had been taken away for a trip of two months. October comes; the rain falls; the sea is high; the weather melancholy. Let us move on. Accordingly they change their abode, thinking all the while of Paris.

Artillery caissons, ambulances, concerts for the wounded, a noisy and lugubrious boulevard. At night, the shops lighted by a single lamp, the houses, the trees having ample space to spread their shadows, and the moonlight superb in this extinguished city — which makes the corners of the streets dangerous, the roofs wan, Paris too large — it is thus that we must see it in dreaming of it.

Each house has its anguish. The children no longer have milk. We tremble for those on the ramparts. We fear for those afar off, in that gloomy line which surrounds the city, an engagement of the outposts and those watches of the grand'garde, where the slightest rustle of foliage, a pebble rolling to the water brings the hissing of bullets. Danger everywhere, and day by day less hope. Oh! those dark days, the pigeons lost, the provinces so far off, the mud of Bourget, the cannon always belated, the square of the Hôtel de Ville foggy and tumultuous.

And yet, perhaps never did one feel that force, that living soul of Paris, more active, — in spite of the very cold winter, the waitings before the butcher's-shops, begun in the night-time and in snow, when the cannon of the forts were thundering, when we dreamed of French battalions advancing in haste through a devastated country, the woods rased, and having but one battle left to fight, one river left to cross; we breathed everywhere an air of high courage, as if in Paris, already

delivered, the gates opened, Liberty were hovering above the whole city, laden with conquering banners.

But beyond the ramparts what distress! Deserted roads, abandoned manufactories, great gloomy plains already looking like battle-fields, the earth torn-up and hollowed. Loop-holes in the walls of the manufactories, intrenchments in the parks, battalions of Mobiles encamped in all the villages, some installed in pretty bourgeois residences with gilded railings, porticos, balconies, where uniforms were drying the day after mounting guard; others were shivering, lighting great fires in the one-storey houses where the smaller tradesmen of Paris go out in summer to spend one day a week, and where from the garden and the low-windowed chambers they can talk and call to one another in the peace of a Sunday evening.

All around, overlooking this melancholy zone, woods, mills, hillsides, scarcely distinct in the fogs of winter, where the enemy's cannon keep arriving daily in spite of the snow and the bad roads; planting themselves in ambush, pointing at Paris, rendering forever lugubrious the names of little villages, so gay to read in the sunshine on the railway stations, at the corners of roads when they were to Parisians the objects of a drive and a rendezvous for fêtes.

The days become shorter, bread more scarce. One evening, in the twilight of shops lighted by one lamp only, there are gilt things, bright ribbons,

sugar-plums in tender colours. This is Christmas! The humble cradle sheltered in corners of chapels, rocked with canticles and flowered with lilies — adorable symbols of infancy — gives eternal joy to all the little ones. They ought to see in dreams at least once a year that smiling Jesus lying in the manger, the straw scattered round him, like luminous rays.

For children likewise, this New Year's Day in a beleaguered city spreading playthings out among the encumbering masses of battalions in arms. On little tables the height of a child's eye, we see once more the little articles of furniture (which look like a pauper's house-moving), and the chubby-faced dolls, to which snow and the north wind are giving such lively colours. The shops are filling with marvels. And yet those heavy drays we are wont to see arriving at the stations of the Eastern railroad, laden with white wooden boxes retaining, as it were, a perfume of the forests of the North, are not coming this year; perhaps they will never come again. But do not feel alarmed. Paris can suffice unto herself, and our children will never lack playthings. In the depths of the sad little courtyards in the poorer quarters, in corners of the faubourg without light or air there are tall houses five storeys high filled with patient needles and delicate looms which scatter threads of gold lace and shavings of rosewood into the dust of attics.

Paris still found strength to smile. Two days later, on three sides at once, the bombardment

broke forth, lugubrious, continual. The earth was shaken as well as the air, and hearths that were sheltered and far from disaster felt their windows shaken like a warning or a threat. In that great city, where the closed manufactories were silent, their strength and life expending themselves on the ramparts and at the outposts, in the streets almost deserted, where carriages were rare and passers sad, this great bombardment resembled those storms which make silence around them, arrest the rustle of leaves and the murmur of fields, as if to render more sinister the thunderbolt that falls and the house that crumbles.

The first lightning of this great storm had shone upon the blue line of the frontiers on a fine summer's day. The wheat was not reaped, the vines lined the slopes, the great trees quivered full of life. The rivers sang beneath the arches of the bridges, and the town surrounded by fortresses, the villages surrounded by water, composed with their daily life an atmosphere of noise or of calmness, which rose into their corner of the sky, and seemed as if it must envelop them forever.

"The enemy is crossing the Rhine all along the front."

I remember the shudder that I felt on reading that little despatch, slender as the line that marks the frontier on a map, with such great horizons beyond it. After that day nothing could stop them, and that enormous power, *invasion*, irresistible as water, which flows the stronger and more terrible from each obstacle, drove in the ramparts, and

forced the passages. Paris, for five months, was indeed the Isle of France in the midst of a torrent which roared around its gates.

The struggle is over. As the forts must be surrendered, and the arms delivered up, the soldiers return to Paris. They march without order, disbanded. We feel the tumult of that return, which lets us see, confused, confounded, dragging their feet, those masses of men, usually so alike in gait and costume, a unit in marching, that we seem to hear a giant's step upon the way. But near the Observatory at the corner of one of those streets lined with trees which end Paris, I saw a whole battalion of Bretons marching in line as they did on their departure. From time to time the commander who marched at their head turned round to them: "Come on, my *gars*, come on!" This was said with the intonation of a shepherd gathering and encouraging a wearied flock. All around were battered houses, twisted balconies, and burned sheds. That day was heart-breaking. Emotion trembled in all voices. Discouragement was in the air, a lassitude that was felt even more than defeat, the despair of the useless weapon, broken, and flung into the moats of the fortress.

Trouble entered Paris at that moment and never left it again. It was perpetual agitation — the agitation that fills the streets and leaves the workshops empty. Processions without end went up to the Bastille, grouped themselves around the column of July, which was decorated with red

flags and crowns of *immortelles*. Cannon rumbled along the pavements as if casting a defiance to that accursèd place. One felt that a great impetus had been given, and that a city stirred for four months by so many songs, trumpet-blasts, and drums, could not return to labour and to calmness without a shock. Paris still kept up its appearance of a besieged city living from day to day. The sidewalks were noisy, encumbered with articles of all kinds as on the morrow of a conflagration, when, the house being destroyed, the household goods which have been saved cast hurriedly from the windows, the women and children camp in the streets and settle there for the life of a day.

I do not know what uncertainty keeps us at the windows, drags us to noises. Bayonets glitter everywhere, though nothing more was said of battles, barricades at the bridges, defiances of Paris against Paris, those dangerous misunderstandings, when tocsins and volleys answer each other with the obstinacy of a signal. We felt the pavements tremble, hatreds quiver. With it all, the caprice of a Parisian springtime, the most capricious of all. The March sun, that hot sun which comes before the buds put forth, scorches and does harm, gliding between two showers upon crazy posters. While in the deserted shops the long idle shopkeepers are hastening to dress their windows, clean the panes, and sweep away the dust, sole visitor from without for months, carriages are passing silently, hurriedly, bearing away the life of Paris, the fortunes of Paris.

Behold her delivered over to herself, shut up anew, that terrible Paris. We, who have all left her, we live with our eyes turned to the hills that hide her from us and knowing nothing now of what goes on within her. We are here in a conquered country; the roads are free, the gates wide open, the house is no longer its own. The railings have gaps for the passage of cavalry, and around the lawns, which are turning green, and the groves, that are budding, soldiers are walking about, crushing the flowers, cutting the branches with the careless indifference of idler and victor. Near-by are other country-houses, completely abandoned for the last year; their owners departing when the war broke out, and never returning to see the miseries of the invasion.

The house is plundered, the hedges ruined, grass is growing in the paths. In a corner of the garden is a woman in charge of a child, her eyes turned to the highway, rendering the solitude that hangs about her sadder still by her own air of expectant waiting and idleness. The bridges had all been destroyed and the great trees felled where their shadows had lain, and yet by the shore road which swept round the slope the Prussians arrived in spite of all precautions, without the loss of either man or horse.

For the last four months they have been there. Battalions succeed each other, marching toward Paris or returning to Germany, and, after a short halt and a summons on the high-road (for all doors are marked in advance), the men enter, in-

stall themselves, clean their arms, set the watches, and go in and out at all hours.

Nothing is usually more charming than to be the last to go to sleep in a silent house which we feel to be full of loved ones. A great calm after the bustle of the day pervades the walls, the furniture; the air of the garden and all the breezes heard in the tranquillity of the night seem the breathing of the house itself, slumbering in the moonlight, the doorway mute, the windows closed. But to feel close by an imposed guest, one who has come of himself, gun in hand, bloodying hedges and rivers, a guest who has entered by force, to whom grief and pride gave free way as soon as he arrived! Who knows from how many battles he is resting, and with how many dreams of victories and massacres he is troubling the invisible soul of the home? There is a corner in the house that one would fain wall up.

It was in the midst of all this sadness that we heard cannon thundering in Paris. In the wood still leafless the shells fell like hail; the nightingales uttered their limpid notes in the white-thorn bushes, the frogs hopped about in the little pools which the rain had left in the ruts; the noise was too great and too distant to disturb those little lives that were only made uneasy by the breaking of a branch, or the fall of a leaf.

The Tuileries and the Louvre are burned!

The Tuileries, a beautiful memory of childhood! Parisian Sundays, sombre skies above the gray slate

roofs, the basins where the alleys widen and branch, the sad clock, the statues, the great terrace skirting the quay, the water so near, the soft melancholy of the declining day, and the mist which rises while Paris is illuminating around it. Flocks of children, blue velvets, white furs, and later the joy, so great, of making the little feet run in the sand where we have set our own.

And the Louvre? Why no! The Louvre was saved. The next day people said: "Paris is burned, all Paris."

I saw it later, riddled with balls, in that terrible hour when the calcined walls, still standing, seemed to be protected against the flames, while from the smoking ruins rose an odour of conflagration.

On that day the weather was superb. At the top of the Hôtel de Ville the sun was putting galleries of light behind the vacant windows, and the statues stood erect and whole, as if their proud deportment had saved them from the general overthrow.

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